

"She Married a Frenchman"—A Complete Novelette

The SMART SET

*A Magazine of
Cleverness*



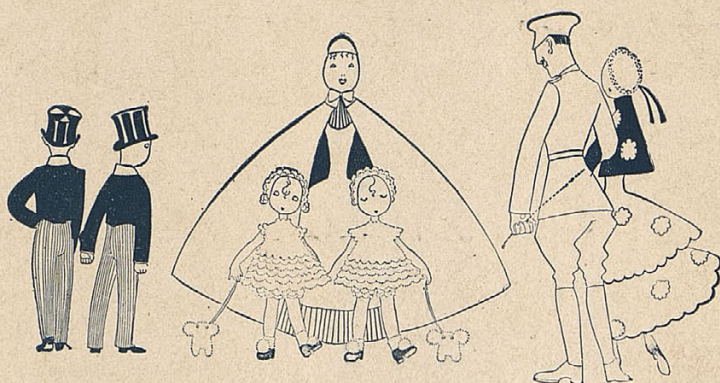
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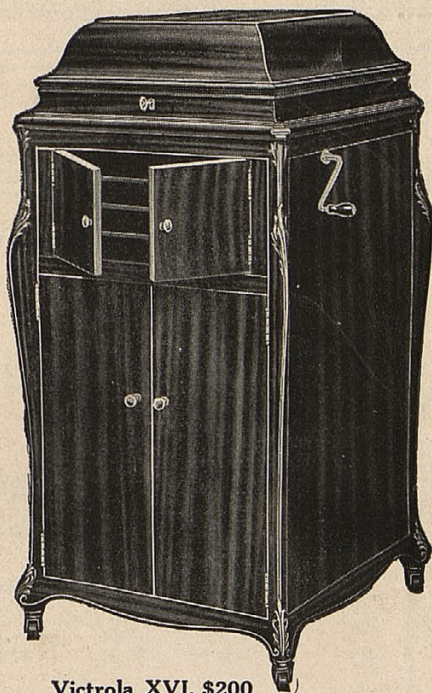
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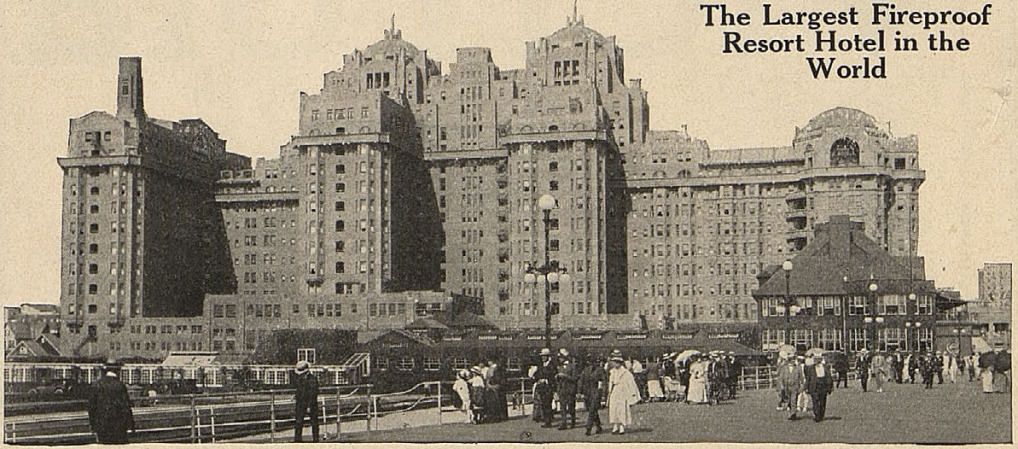
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THE SMART SET

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HALF A HUNDRED BURLESQUES, EPIGRAMS, POEMS, SHORT SATIRES, ETC.

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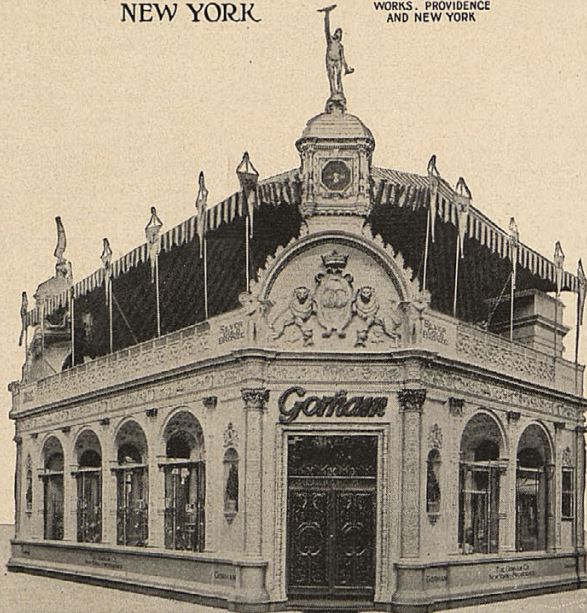
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THE SMART SET

An Amusing Magazine for Amusing People

I WANT A HUSBAND!

By Lilith Benda

HE must be around thirty-seven,—the age when a man who has run about a good bit becomes bored with women, and prefers the companionship of an intelligent dog.—

He must not write me sonnets.—

He must not look like a Greek god.—

He must never call me "svelte," "lissome," "lithe," "mysterious," "exotic," "fragrant," "a panther," "a serpent," "a gardenia"; he must call me "old dear."—

All the very prettiest women must flirt with him, and make me feel proud.—

He must make love gracefully,—no divine madness, no wild frenzies. It must be *dolce*, *piano*, *cantabile*, a bit of *vivace*, a dash of *rubato*, a flavoring of *con brio*, but no *fortissimo*, no *con fuoco*, no crashing *crescendo*.—

He must have no talent, only a tinge of genius. He must be a just-missed, an almost-was, a "Raphael without hands."—

He must never say, "You are the inspiration which will lead me to great

things," or "Such is your power that you hold my destiny in the hollow of your little hand."—

Occasionally he must get drunk, not gutter-drunk, but gloriously, I-rule-the-world, the-universe-is-mine drunk.—

He must prefer beer to champagne, Heine to Goethe, Fremstad to Farrar, a tiny Tanagra figure to the Venus of Melos, Andreyeff to Galsworthy, a pretty cabaret girl to a brilliant suffragette and a pretty suffragette to a stodgy anti, the first act of "Die Walküre" to the second act of "Tristan," Schnitzler to Hauptmann, Beethoven's roars to Tchaikowsky's wails, pussy-willow taffeta lingerie to the laciest batiste, "Der Rosenkavalier" to "Madam Butterfly," Monet to Matisse, Irving Berlin to Ethelbert Nevin, Pater's description of the Mona Lisa to the Mona Lisa herself, a few narcissi in a Della Robbia jar to a garden full of roses, my fetching frocks to my beautiful soul.—

I want a husband!



THE GREATEST GIFT

By Owen Hatteras

THE fairies who fly with gifts to the cradles of all new-born babies had had a busy day. There had been so many little newcomers, and from early morn to nightfall they had flitted from home to home, bestowing riches here, beauty there, sins, virtues, graces and failings in a haphazard sort of way. They had paused, too, at sunset, in a tenement basement, and breathed genius into the heart of a tiny boy. Now, it is very tiring to bestow the gift of genius; it requires great effort and that's why the fairies almost never grant it. When they were finished, they were a little weary and cross, and wanted to fly home to their palace of moonbeams. But one cradle remained unvisited. So they hied them to the side of a colicky, squirming infant boy who wailed raucously into the night. The fairies grew angry as they heard him. Reluctantly they shrugged their dainty wings, and flew off without leaving a single gift behind. Only one wavered an instant, glanced pityingly at the ugly child, and called over her shoulder as she hurried to join her sisters:

"I bestow upon you the gift of Gigantic Ignorance, and the gift of Majestic Incapacity."

The years went by.

The boy grew up into a benign-faced, wide-girthed man who looked like a picture of God by Harrison Fisher.

He wrote Books with a Purpose

which ran into twentieth and thirtieth editions, and spread his fame into all lands until he had scarcely time to rake in the shekels that came pouring into his coffers.

Newspapers vied with one another for the opportunity to pay thousands for his Uplift Editorials.

He gave utterance, at lectures, to Great Ideas upon suffrage, upon eugenics, upon temperance, upon the social evil and the poor working girl.

Sightseeing busses stopped before his house, and his disciples gazed with reverence upon its sacred portals.

He preached zealously against the Vicious Influence of Continental Literature, and cleared the theaters and book-stores of every vestige thereof.

They called him the Protector of Innocence, the Champion of the Masses, and from far and near adherents flocked unto him.

He went into politics. They made him mayor, they made him governor, they made him president for three terms, almost they made him God.

And as he drove through the streets, while the crowd waved their hats and cheered him wildly and went mad in honor of their Great One, men bowed their heads, and whispered to one another in awe:

"What great, mysterious gift was bestowed at birth upon our Mighty One, to make him thus our King, our Emperor, our Holiest of the Holy?"



SHE MARRIED A FRENCHMAN

By Phyllis Bottome

CHAPTER I

THE Pinsents never saw any reason why they shouldn't be modern without—as they expressed it—going too far.

They didn't believe in the sheltered-life system, but that was perhaps because they rather underestimated their own idea of what constituted a shelter.

There were certain risks, of course, in allowing your daughters to play mixed hockey, smoke cigarettes and belong to a suffrage movement (they could attend meetings, but weren't to throw stones). Still, it was strange how little harm these concessions to modernity had done the Pinsent girls.

Bernard Shaw rolled off them like water from a duck's back.

Somewhere between the ages of fourteen and seventeen Mrs. Pinsent presented her daughters with an approximate definition of life. Agatha yawned and Edith said, "Oh, dear! We knew all that ages ago." For a moment Mrs. Pinsent became agitated. Had they, in spite of the healthiness of their surroundings, come in contact with evil influences? But she was reassured when Agatha explained that they had picked it up from rabbits.

Rose, who was more sensitive and less observant, gave her mother more trouble than the others, but she acquiesced at last that God must know best, though it all seemed rather funny. They were not to earn their own livings because later on—(later on being the term in which the Pinsent parents envisaged their retreat from this world) they would have plenty of money; but they were expected to develop hobbies.

The eldest girls developed splendid

hobbies. Agatha, who was the plainest of the three, became a lawn tennis champion with a really smashing serve. Edith distinguished herself by writing a history of one of our western counties. She rode all over it on a bicycle and stayed at vicarages by herself. She earned a hundred pounds by this adventure and had a particularly pleasant notice in the *Spectator*.

Rose was rather slower at taking anything up. She had had pneumonia when she was at school, and it had left her nominally but not at all obstructively delicate.

She played an excellent game of hockey and was her father's favourite.

It was really for Rose's sake that they all decided to go to Rome.

They thought Rose would almost certainly settle down to something after that, and it would be good for Edith, who, now she had finished Somersetshire, might like to begin on Rome.

She could at any rate compare the different types of architecture. A friend of hers, a Mr. Bunning, said there wasn't any architecture in Rome, but you could never be quite sure what Mr. Bunning meant. Edith hadn't been quite sure for several years—nor apparently had Mr. Bunning, but perhaps their going to Rome might help him to find out. Agatha was very good-natured about it; she said she thought Rome would do as well as anywhere else.

The Pinsents were a most accommodating family and though, of course, they sometimes quarrelled, it was all in a loud, direct, natural way which generally ended in chaff.

They never quarrelled with Rose as

much as with each other because of her having been rather delicate, still they chaffed her a good deal. She wouldn't have liked it if they hadn't.

They knew they weren't like other families of their class and standing; they prided themselves on talking to people in railway carriages and even crossing the Channel. Of course, they were particularly good sailors, but even if they hadn't been they would have been nice and friendly and not at all stuck up about being sick.

Agatha was thinking of marrying a Canadian who took most magnificent back-handers, Edith was still wondering what Mr. Bunning meant, but Rose was perfectly free.

She'd had two proposals, but both of them had been from men she had known all her life and liked most awfully—but not in that way. So that she'd had, as Mrs. Pinsent put it to her husband, "quite a lot of experience for twenty-one and none of the bother of it."

Mr. Pinsent growled and said that if Rose married the right kind of man she never would have any bother.

Mrs. Pinsent looked thoughtful; she didn't want to think that Mr. Pinsent was the wrong kind of man, it would have been dreadful after being married to him for thirty years. Still, she couldn't honestly have said that she hadn't had any bother with him.

Probably Mr. Pinsent had forgotten it; men do not remember that kind of thing in the same way.

They chose a French hotel in Rome because they thought it would be more Italian, and when they arrived there everything was just as foreign as possible, which was what the Pinsents wanted—provided that they could get enough hot water.

The Hotel le Roy was even for Rome extraordinarily "black." Its *clientèle* was composed of French priests, their sisters, ladies of pronounced age and severity, one or two French families of prehistoric clans, small means and a son at a seminary, and a few Dutch Catholics who were, if anything, black-

er than the French, but distinctly pleasanter to the English. Black French Catholics do not like English Protestants. The war may have softened this feeling, but this episode took place a year before the war, when the *Entente Cordiale* was looked upon as a Socialist blunder to be sharply counteracted in private by a studied coldness of manner.

Mrs. Pinsent, whose French the whole family relied upon, did nothing to improve the situation. She said to Madame la Comtesse de Brenteuil, who couldn't very well help going up in the lift with her, "Isn't it a pity the Vatican shuts so often for church things? They say we shan't be able to get into the Sistine chapel in Holy Week, and one of my daughters is writing an article on the Sibyls—it's really most annoying!"

Madame de Brenteuil looked at Mrs. Pinsent as if she were a smut that had fallen on her sleeve; then, with a weary irony, she observed, "Perhaps, Madame, the English do not realize that the Holy Father is a Catholic?" Mrs. Pinsent was eager to reassure her as to Anglo-Saxon intuitions. She said, "Oh, yes—we quite understand his own personal views—but it isn't as if Rome really belonged to him, is it?"

Fortunately the lift stopped. It was not Madame de Brenteuil's *étage*, but she got out.

After this incident no French person in the Le Roy spoke to Mrs. Pinsent or her daughters, so that it was rather difficult for Léon Legier to begin—especially as he was a third cousin to the Comtesse, and *lié* to almost everybody there.

He had made up his mind to begin from the moment that Rose Pinsent dropped a breakfast roll and blushed as she stooped to pick it up.

He had never seen such a blush before on any woman's face, and any colour he had failed to surprise upon a woman's face he had naturally supposed could not exist.

Apparently it did, for Rose had it. Her blush was as fine in hue as that of

a pink tulip and as delicate as a winter cloud at dawn.

It swept up in a wave from her white throat into her pale, silky, fair hair, and the fact that she suddenly discovered Léon was observing her did not tend to decrease her colour. Léon Legier made his opportunity that evening in the hall. The porter was explaining to Mrs. Pinsent what time to start for Tivoli the following morning. His English was limited and he altered the train hour to suit the convenience of the foreign tongue. The greater inconvenience of missing the train had not occurred to him until Léon intervened.

Subsequently Léon discovered that almost all the porter's other information suffered from similar readjustments of language, and he and Mrs. Pinsent sat down in the lounge to revise the day's excursion. Mrs. Pinsent should, perhaps, have thought of her daughters, but Léon gave her no time to think of her daughters. He focused her attention upon herself. She felt herself young again, almost dangerous; the young man before her apologetic, diffident, with exquisite manners, was so obviously attracted by her and intent on all that she had to tell him, she had not the heart to cut the conversation short. Later on Mr. Pinsent joined them. He was delighted to find another man to talk to in his own tongue, and who was obviously acquainted with the name of Lloyd George.

It fortunately never transpired that Léon had confused the name of the then Chancellor of the Exchequer with that of a horse who had won the Derby.

Mr. Pinsent told Léon what the English Government really meant and attacked the Italian railway system. Léon listened politely, and it was only at the end of the conversation that Mr. Pinsent discovered his young foreign friend was after all merely French. Not that Mr. Pinsent minded Frenchmen—but they could hardly be held responsible for the state of Italian railways.

In spite of his nationality, however, Léon was able to give Mr. Pinsent the name of a remarkably good wine to be procured at Tivoli; he regretted that the best place to lunch required a slight knowledge of how to order Italian dishes. Mr. Pinsent said it was a pity Léon wasn't going with them. Léon only hesitated enough not to appear over-eager; his deprecatory, half-delighted eyes sought Mrs. Pinsent's, and she said quickly, "But perhaps you could come with us?" Léon produced his card. The Pinsents gave him theirs on which was written, "Rocketts, Thornton-in-the-Hedges," and on Léon's was written, No. 9, Faubourg St. Germain, Paris, and there was no one there to point out the deadly disparity between the two.

CHAPTER II

THE next day was glorious, a spacious, sunny, golden Roman day. The air across the Campagna was delicate and keen. The Cascades at Tivoli fell in tumultuous rushes out of their purple caverns.

The tiny temple of the Sibyls caught itself up against a sharpness of the sky. It hung, perilous and delicate, above the cliff like a little weather-beaten, storm-tossed shell.

Léon made no attempt to talk to Rose. He hardly looked at her, but he persistently observed her. He saw that she had in some sense which had been denied her family, imagination and warmth.

He surprised in her a sympathy of attention different from the playful kindness of her sisters.

Agatha and Edith were from the first jolly with Léon. They cultivated, with masculine acquaintances, a slightly jocular tone, and the humour of this was deepened, of course, by Léon's being a Frenchman.

They gambolled cheerfully about him, much like heavy sheep dogs good-humouredly greeting a greyhound.

Léon accommodated his pace to theirs, he met them half way, but he

privately thought they weren't like women at all.

He took Agatha round the little temple and Edith to the foot of the highest waterfall. He let their niceness (for he recognised with a rare leap of the imagination that they were being nice to him) expand into unconscious revelations.

He allowed their frank communications to slip over the polished surface of his manner like leaves borne on the waters that dashed past them. Once or twice he arrested the floating leaves with the point of his stick, and once or twice in the flood of Edith's careless chatter he held, very slightly, the point of his mind against a special revelation.

He gathered that the Pinsents were very well off. It wasn't that they ever spoke of money, but the tremendous amount of things you had to have, the bother of wagon lits and the burden of expensive hotels filtered through their wider statements of having to think twice as to whether they'd go on to Sicily or not. They deplored prices, but they invariably chose the best of what there was. Léon listened carefully, but he hadn't at first any real intentions.

Rose pleased him. She was an unknown English type. A strange creature, as independent as if she were married, and as innocent as if she had never seen a man.

He decided to devote himself a little to studying her, and in order to do this he had, of course, to accept the Pinsent family.

To Mr. Pinsent he could only be attentive. He found him an English club and was delighted to observe the increasing use which Mr. Pinsent made of it. Mrs. Pinsent, however, was comparatively easy to handle. She was a woman with the maternal instinct, and with her Léon found it easy to be candid.

He told her that he had just finished his military service and was now taking a little "voyage" before settling down. He talked a good deal about his mother, who occupied herself with good works in Paris; his father he mentioned less,

and the works that occupied him not at all. Nevertheless, it could be seen that he had a great affection for both his parents and no brothers and sisters.

"I expect that's why he likes," Mrs. Pinsent explained to her husband, "to be so much with the girls."

It was three days before Léon found himself alone with Rose.

She had begun to feel a little out of this gay stranger's intimacy. It seemed to Rose as if Léon purposely avoided her, and yet, in a way, which was very strange to her, their eyes sometimes met, and then he seemed to be telling her something as direct as a penny and as inarticulate as the cobblestones of Rome.

Then all of a sudden, breathlessly, without preparation, she found herself alone with him in the Campagna.

Mr. Pinsent had said that the girls were on no account to go outside the walls of Rome by themselves.

He hadn't made it perfectly clear why he put this obstacle to their general freedom, but he'd mentioned when pressed by Agatha, malarial fever and savage Abruzzi sheep dogs.

"So I expect I shall just have to go to a gallery instead," Rose explained to Léon in the hall. "Edith has gone off with someone to see a fountain, and won't be back for hours." Léon hesitated, then he said, "How far does the wonderful English freedom extend? Is it an impertinence that I should offer to take you—wherever you wish to go?"

"Oh, thank you very much. Yes, of course I could go with you . . ." Rose answered a little slowly. It seemed to her in some strange way that her freedom had ceased to be menaced by her father and mother, but not to have become any the more secure.

She couldn't have said that she disliked the sense of danger, but she knew quite well what increased it. It was Léon's saying as they stood for a moment outside the street door, "Do you know it is since three days—I have been waiting for this?"

They took the tram to San Giovanni Laterano, and as it shuffled and

shrieked its clamorous way through narrow streets and wide piazzas, under old yellow walls and through long white modern tunnels, a new sensation came to Rose Pinsent.

She had always supposed that what she liked best in a man was his being tremendously manly, and by manly the Pinsents meant impervious to the wills of others, abrupt in speech, and taking up everywhere a good deal of space.

But Léon was masculine in quite a different way and yet no one could doubt his possessing that particular quality.

The form it took with him was that Rose became suddenly conscious of his physical presence. She noticed as she had never noticed in any man before, his smallest personal habits, the flutter of his fine hard eyes, the scrupulous neatness and grace of his person, and, above all, the alert and faultless precision with which in any direction he met her half way.

He gave her from moment to moment the whole of his indulgent intensity. No man had ever looked at her like this before, so read her mind and forced her in return to read his own!

The tram was crowded and Léon stood above her, holding on to a strap and looking down at her with laughing eyes. "You are thinking something of me, Mademoiselle," he said at last. "Confess it is a comparison, not, of course, to my advantage. Tell me, then, to whom are you comparing me, in what do I fall short?"

Rose tried to frown. "Why should you suppose I am thinking of you at all?" she ventured. Léon laughed softly. "Why indeed?" he murmured. "And yet why should you not? Here you are, you and I; we have not yet exchanged half a dozen words, and now we are to be together for, I hope, three hours, and all these last days I have been waiting for these hours—planning for them, arranging, as it were, my life to meet them. Surely you, who have not prevented my obtaining them, must now be giving a thought to what I am like? It would be droll to go for a

ride on a strange horse and not to look at it, not question a little its character, how shall we put it—its pace? Would you think less of the companionship of a man?"

Rose drew in her breath sharply. Léon had a way of putting things which was very exciting, but not, perhaps, quite nice.

"But," she said, "of course we have thought of you—Mother and Father, they thought you were—" she paused, breathless. Léon came to her assistance. "Respectable? Oh, yes," he said easily. "But that doesn't go very far, does it? Simply to go for an expedition with someone who is respectable! Your excellent Mr. Thomas Cook could provide you with that. You might even procure for a few francs more a gentleman to give you a lecture! Really, Mademoiselle, I had flattered myself that your imagination had dealt with me a trifle more directly!"

Rose tacitly admitted this claim. "Agatha and Edith thought you awfully jolly," she said hurriedly. "So I didn't see, I mean I didn't mind when you suggested coming out with me."

Léon laughed again. "But I am afraid," he said, "that I shan't be in the least with you what I was like with Mademoiselles Agatha and Edith—'awfully jolly.' I do not think of you in those terms. You will have to decide for yourself and not take anybody's word for it what I am like to you."

Rose said nothing. She was glad that they had to get out at the foot of the Lateran steps.

They took a little carriage which went very fast through the swollen, sallow suburb; it soon left behind it the trams, the cobblestones and the shuffling wine carts. Almost at once the Campagna was upon them, vaguely breaking away from the farms and the eucalyptus trees into soft-breathing, deep, unbroken emptiness.

They wandered out over the grass to the ruin of a villa, an old pink tower and a group of umbrella pines.

"It asks to be sketched, doesn't it?" Léon observed. "And now you will

have to be very definite, Mademoiselle. It won't do for you to suppose that you can judge of it without a glance, as if it were merely a new masculine acquaintance!"

He opened her camp-stool and gravely placed himself on an old wall behind her. "Vous y êtes," he asserted, "begin!"

But Rose didn't begin. She had been thinking of what he had asked her. Perhaps she hadn't been quite frank. The Pinsents as a family thought it a sin not to be quite frank.

"I was thinking about you," she admitted. "I mean myself; I thought—I thought you weren't at all like an Englishman!"

Léon laughed gently. "What a discovery," he said. "I am not like an Englishman—I! And did you want me to be? You are disappointed, perhaps?"

The wonderful pink colour deepened in her face. "No," she said, "I am not a bit disappointed—I like people to be different."

"Thank you Mademoiselle," he said with sudden gravity. "You relieve me very much, for that is one thing I could not change for you—I could not be less a Frenchman."

Still she did not begin her sketch. "You are tired?" he asked her. "Rest then, and don't trouble to make a picture on that little strip of canvas. Nothing you can do there will, I assure you, be half as successful as what you are doing, by just sitting where you are."

She was sure he was flirting now, but what she wasn't sure was how to stop it. She wondered if Edith or Agatha knew, but it flashed across her in a terrible moment of disloyalty that perhaps neither of them had ever been put to the proof. "I don't think you ought to say that kind of thing—" she said a little uncomfortably.

"But why not?" Léon urged. "Why do you not wish me to take pleasure in your beauty? And if I take it, would it not be rude and ungracious not to express it? For my part I believe only

in the truth. If it is agreeable—good! Let us enjoy it. If it is disagreeable, let us bear it! But why should we try to avoid it? Besides we can never avoid it. If we choose to shut our eyes to the truth it will take us by surprise. Is that the way you like to be taken, Mademoiselle?"

Rose was not a stupid girl; she gave Léon a fleeting glance; there was just the delicate hint of laughter in it, her lips trembled at the upturned corners. "I don't like being taken at all," said Rose sedately, returning to her sketch.

It occurred to her afterwards this was not, perhaps, the best way to stop flirting.

They came back rather late for tea, but Mr. and Mrs. Pinsent were not at all uneasy about them. They didn't look feverish and they hadn't seen any savage Abruzzi dogs.

CHAPTER III

For a Frenchman of the type of Léon Legier there are a great many ways of being in love; there are also several goals. You needn't, as he himself expressed it, finish the game in order to have received your entertainment.

In the case of Rose Pinsent, Léon wasn't at first very serious, he was out for the fine shades. He had never had an intimacy with an Englishwoman before. It was simply a nationality he didn't know, and he found it touching.

For her sake he led the Pinsents in compact and cheerful batches into unknown churches and gave them on unfrequented hillsides splendid Roman views.

He never made a visible point of the few moments alone he managed to snatch with Rose.

She took these moments with a certain unexact grace which pleased him.

It was as if she had a special pleasure which never amounted to expectation in his presence. Her grave blue eyes never claimed him, but when he signalled his own joy into hers—he met

with no rebuff. He had passed certain barriers with her and she made no attempt to set them up again.

She was secretly afraid, not of him, but of being so different when they were alone together. She tried very hard to be just the same as she was when those queens of chaff, Agatha and Edith, presided over their small festivities.

She had never supposed before you could have two relations with the same person, without doing anything wrong, and yet the most rigid of her scruples failed to warn her that when she and Léon were together they did anybody any harm.

Rose would have stopped all "nonsense" at once; what she couldn't stop was the gradual dangerous tenderness, growing touch by touch under the hand of a master.

She tried not to think too much about Léon, and as long as he was with them she found that she succeeded.

Everything became so interesting and so vivid—but when Léon was out of their sight, buried in obscure private affairs, hidden, perhaps, by his French relations whom he persistently excused to the Pinsents as being poor dear people, so terribly provincial and shy! Rose found Rome wonderfully little of an absorption—she was forced to consider that what she really needed was, like her sisters, some definite active goal. Her mind became set upon a hobby. She felt if she had that, it wouldn't really matter whether Rome was interesting or not. She could not have told quite how the idea came to her; perhaps it was because little Italian children in the streets looked so sweet—but she suddenly thought she would like, when she got back to England, to have a nice little home in the country for children to get well in, quite poor people's children—only they would be washed there, of course, and probably have curly hair. She told Léon about it one day when they were in St. Maria in Frastevere and had snatched a moment to go off by themselves into the sacristy, to admire what

Baedeker so aptly alludes to as "the admirable ducks."

"Papa," Rose explained to Léon, "had been so kind, he thought it could be managed." For a moment Léon looked in silence at the admirable ducks—and then he laughed a gentle, caressing laugh and flushed a little, fixing his hard bright eyes on her upturned face.

"But Mademoiselle," he said, "hasn't it occurred to you that to have your own children—nice little healthy ones—wouldn't that be just as amusing and not quite as expensive for Papa?"

It seemed as if Rose's very heart had blushed under his eyes. She wanted for a moment to go away from him—to hide from out of his sight.

She said quickly and vaguely, "Oh, I don't know—one doesn't think about such things," Léon said, "Doesn't one? I assure you I do."

He hadn't said any more, but it was the moment of his own intention. He saw as clearly as the lines of the mosaic on the wall—the prospect of a definite new life.

This mere study of a delightful English temperament should develop into the most serious of all his affairs.

A girl as beautiful and as innocent with such a command of so compliant a parent (for little homes in the country for sick children must involve an elastic pocket on the part of Mr. Pinsent) struck Léon as a rare and favourable opportunity.

After all, he meant to settle down some day. His mother wanted it, and his father's extravagance had done much to make a good match difficult in France, and Léon liked Rose, he appreciated her. She was innocent, but she wasn't eager—she made no advances towards him—she was modest without being in any danger of striking him as a fool. She knew, for instance, when to hold her tongue.

She was the only one of the Pinsent family who had the good taste to ignore an awkward little episode which took place at about this time.

Léon had been very fortunate hitherto, he had also been skilful. Rome is

not a large town, nor one in which it is very easy to keep one's acquaintances definitely apart.

Léon was at this time carrying on two perfectly different affairs. There was the Pinsent affair—which hadn't arrived and which took up a good deal of time, and for which he chose a certain type of occupation, but there was another affair—which had arrived some time ago, very much less serious, of course, but also requiring time and a background from which he had so far succeeded in eliminating any appearance on the part of the Pinsent family.

Mr. Pinsent upset this arrangement by altering at the last moment, and without notifying Léon—the programme prepared in advance by Léon and Mrs. Pinsent. Mr. Pinsent decided that he would go to Frascati and walk up a hill to a place called Tusculum. There wasn't much to be seen when you got there—but what he suddenly felt was that he needed more exercise, and they could get lunch at the Grand Hotel coming back.

It was at the Grand Hotel that the incident happened. Léon saw them coming, inexorably across the garden in close formation, waving parasols and shouting their unfettered greetings.

He notified the brilliant lady who was his companion that they must instantly retire in the opposite direction. His companion stared, not at him—a glance had explained him to her quick intelligence—but at the Pinsent family. She said under her breath, "The English have no families—they have tribes—this appears to be a savage one."

Léon never moved a muscle of his face—he turned his back resolutely upon the approaching Pinsents, and took his companion into the hotel—where he asked for a private room. If the Pinsents chose to follow him there—it would be a pity—but everything would be at an end. There are forms that must be preserved even in the face of self-interest. Léon knew that he would never forgive Rose if the Pinsents went any further. But they didn't go any further—Rose diverted

their attention—she loudly declared that it wasn't Léon—and insisted on remaining in the garden. She owned when pressed that the walk had been too much for her. She felt not exactly faint, but that she would rather not go indoors. The Pinsents had their lunch under a magnolia tree in the garden. It was very like a picnic, and Agatha and Edith prepared a splendid method of "roasting Léon" when they got hold of him once more. They effected this seizure in the hall of the hotel that evening. They upbraided him roundly with the exception of Rose. Léon denied steadily that he was ever at Frascati, but of course not—how could he have been there and not rushed to greet them? It wasn't conceivable—they had seen his double! Agatha and Edith described with much wealth of detail the lady he was with (only the English could walk so merrily into dangerous places).

Léon looked graver still. He turned to Rose. "And you, Mademoiselle," he asked, "were you under the impression that you saw me?"

"It certainly did look exactly like you," Mrs. Pinsent murmured, looking rather troubled. "I particularly noticed the hat."

"Lots of people wear hats like Monsieur Legier," Rose said, looking away from Léon.

She was the only one of the party he finally failed to convince.

He did more than admire her then, he respected her. There is no taste so perfect as that which permanently conceals a fact which is awkward for others.

Rose concealed it, but she paid for her good taste by her tears.

CHAPTER IV

LÉON planned in advance the setting for his proposal. He would make it in the English way, to the girl herself. Léon had never proposed marriage before, and he gave the affair his best attention.

The Baths of Caracalla are never

very crowded and at certain times of the day they are extraordinarily solitary.

Léon knew one of the chief excavators and it was part of his idea to take the entire family of Pinsent with the exception of Rose into the underground regions. The excavator, who was an enthusiast, could be calculated to hold them there for a full hour. Rose, who never liked underground temples, agreed easily enough to remain in the open air, and Léon disappeared with the others. She was a little puzzled over Baedeker's description of the Baths of Caracalla, once she got the tepidarium in her head she felt she could get on quite easily, but the tepidarium eluded her. The great roofless, sunny space, wouldn't contract itself reasonably, into a guide book, and then she heard Léon's returning footsteps.

"Has anything happened?" she asked in some alarm.

"That is for you to say," answered Léon with unusual gravity. "For my part I have found you—and that for the moment is enough."

"Didn't you mean to stay down there, then?" asked Rose in some bewilderment.

"Never in the world," said Léon more lightly. "Am I the kind of man to engage myself with the temple of Mitheas, *je m'en fiche de Mitheas!* I beg your pardon—I should say, in the phrase of your American cousins, I have no use for him!"

There was no one but themselves in the Baths of Caracalla, the great pink walls stretched spaciouly around them, the blue sky bent benignantly overhead, under foot the fresh spring grasses spread like an emerald fire.

"I suppose we ought to go all over it properly," Rose asked a little wistfully. Léon shook his head. "Why should we do that?" he objected. "Let us leave propriety to Mitheas. If ancient history is true, he stood much in need of it. For ourselves, let us sit down in this corner—under the shelter of the ivy—and look at the pink blossoms in front of us. If you had not informed

me how serious it is to pay compliments, I should have told that tree—that it was very nearly as pretty as the English complexion; but as I am a very truthful man and have no wish to curry favour with anyone, I should have added, not quite."

Rose smiled a little tremulously. She said nothing, but she hoped Léon would go on talking. She turned her eyes on the blossom tree—its pale pink flowers hung above them like a little cloud.

A silence fell between them, a significant, tremendous silence. Rose became aware that she was alone with Léon in a way in which she had never been alone with anyone before. Their privacy was as breathless as danger. In a moment more it seemed to Rose something tremendous would have happened like an earthquake or a volcano, but probably much nicer than these manifestations of nature.

Then she knew that it had happened already. Léon had caught both her hands in his. "Mademoiselle," he asked her in a queer, strained voice, "Has any man ever kissed you before?"

She lifted frightened, fluttering eyes to his—they were wonderful in their candour.

"No!" she whispered. "No!"

"*Alors!* You will not be able to say that again!" he said firmly, bending towards her. But though his eyes held hers with the intentness of a hawk, he waited for her answering surrender. She startled him by the urgency of her protest. "Oh, don't! Don't!" she pleaded. "Please let me go!" Instantly he released her.

"You don't like me enough?" he asked her in surprise. "Do you think I am such a brute that I would kiss you against your will? Why, never in the world! That is no kiss, that is not a mutual pleasure. But why do you say 'No' to me, Rose?—for your eyes—your eyes say 'Yes'!"

"Oh, no!" she returned. "I know you wouldn't do anything I shouldn't like, but don't you see I can't let you—it's just because I—I do like you so much." She turned her face away

from him, her eyes filled suddenly with tears. "Please don't say any more," she urged. "I know with you it's different—please go away."

But Léon sat down near her. "I will do anything in the world you want," he said firmly, "except go away. After what you have said you cannot expect me to do that. You must listen to me a little now—are you listening, Rose?"

She nodded her head.

"I am going to say something that will give you pain," Léon began slowly. "I had not meant to say it, I had meant, if I were fortunate enough, to give you pleasure, but when you say you like me you make me feel that I must not be a coward. Rose—I am a bad man."

She turned startled, unbelieving eyes upon him. What he said was painful to her, but she had been expecting a different kind of pain.

"Yes," he said gravely. "It is true. I am not in the least worth your regard. I do not think I shall make a good husband even for you. I say this to you because I am going to add the little thing I had hoped might give you pleasure. *Je vous aime*, Mademoiselle." The words had a sharper significance in his own tongue. After he had said them he looked for the first time away from her, towards the almond blossom tree. "You are as fine, as beautiful as that tree," he murmured, "and oh, my dear, you know as little—as these frail pink flowers—about a man like me. How can I ask you to trust me?"

Fear crept into her eyes. "Léon," she whispered, "what you said just now was true, wasn't it?"

"That I am bad?" he asked bitterly. "Yes—it is true—it would be a poor joke, such an assertion, just now, though perhaps it is a poorer truth. It is also true that I would have kept it from you—if you had not greatly moved me."

"No—I didn't mean that," she said gently. "I meant the other thing you said."

He turned quickly. "That I love you?" he asked.

Rose nodded. "Because," she whispered, "I—I would take the risk—if you loved me."

He took her hand and kissed it, and then with a fierce gentleness that seemed impatient of its own restraint, he drew her into his arms and pressed his lips to hers. "You child! You child!" he murmured. "God punish me—if I ever fail you—" But even with his lips against her lips—he envisaged his own failure.

She drew away from him. "Léon," she said, "I want you to let me go home alone—"

He looked at her in surprise—a moment before she had seemed so helpless, so incapable of asserting her surrendered will, and now, facing him with her steady eyes, she seemed an independent, self-reliant woman. For an instant he wondered if he thoroughly understood her, but he put this misgiving away from him.

"You must do whatever you wish, of course," he said gently. "But is it—not that you are unhappy or that you are afraid?"

She turned towards him fiercely. "Yes," she said, "I am afraid. How can anyone be as happy as I am and not be afraid?"

He drew a long breath, he had forgotten that this was her first love.

They walked together to the gates in silence.

Across the road the mortuary chapel opened its big iron doors to let a common Roman funeral pass out. Rose shuddered, and turned wide eyes of terror on Léon. "Oh!" she said, "How can God let anybody die!"

He put her into a carriage, soothing her as best he could, but his own hands trembled. He had not realized how serious this affair was going to be.

It was as serious as death.

CHAPTER V

THE Hotel Le Roy became a place for consultations. Everybody interviewed everybody else. The hall, the stuffed red salon, the tiny, damp gar-

den, even the lift became indispensable for hurried conversations, but of course none of them had the least result. Léon, from the moment of his engagement, had taken rooms at another hotel—this was at once more *convenable* and also much more convenient. His French relatives were furious. He let them consume their fury among themselves, and told them when he had to see them that their interest in his affairs was charming.

The Pinsents were all trying to be large-minded, unisular and modern, but they didn't like it.

Mr. Pinsent made a false start. He told Mrs. Pinsent that the engagement was out of the question. Mrs. Pinsent suggested his seeing Rose for himself and talking it all out. Mr. Pinsent refused hastily, clinging to the one plank of masculine security. "Aren't you the child's mother?" he demanded. Mrs. Pinsent made no attempt to deny this salient fact. She merely said, "I'm afraid Rose will say she wants to see you about it." Mr. Pinsent knew what that meant. If he saw Rose he was lost. But as a matter of fact, he was lost already, without seeing Rose. Mrs. Pinsent had lost him.

After Mr. Pinsent had finished saying that the engagement was all nonsense and that he wouldn't hear of it for a moment, she said he was perfectly right, but it wasn't as if Léon was an Italian, was it? Paris was really not at all far from London when you came to think of it, and Léon was most obliging, and dressed quite like an Englishman, "and after all," she finished, "we haven't anything against him, have we? He told me himself he wasn't a good Roman Catholic."

In the end Mr. Pinsent had to see Rose, and after this he agreed to a further interview with Léon.

The interview was not, from Léon's point of view, at all what it should have been.

Mr. Pinsent had no sense of form. He hardly listened to Léon's statement of his affairs, and he made no statement at all of his own intentions. He

walked up and down the rather cold, deserted salon talking about Rose having had pneumonia when she was twelve, and how sensitive she was, and how much he would miss her. She was quite the best bridge player of these three girls, and her golf was coming on splendidly.

He said he thought Paris hardly the kind of place for a real home life. He hadn't seen any there, some years ago, when he and Mrs. Pinsent stayed in the Rue de Rivoli. He added that he couldn't really feel as if Rose would like continually hearing French spoken all round her. It was quite different from being abroad for a time and coming home again afterwards. Mr. Pinsent laid his hand on Léon's shoulder and sentimentalised the situation in a way that shocked Léon's whole nature.

Emotion should take place (enough of it, for a mere betrothal) between Léon and Rose; it shouldn't take place between Rose's father and Léon, and as for talking about the feeling of a man for a good woman, nothing could have been more out of place. You simply, of course, didn't talk of it. Mr. Pinsent, however, did.

"Of course we must go into everything very carefully later on," Mr. Pinsent finished, rubbing the back of his head. "Rose seems to have set her heart on you—we must all hope you can make her happy."

Then Mr. Pinsent shook hands with Léon and seemed to think there was nothing more to be said.

They never did go into anything later on. In the first place, Madame de Breteuil refused point blank to meet Mrs. Pinsent. "If," she said to Léon, "your mother sanctions your engagement, we have decided to permit ourselves to speak to the girl. Her family we will never accept. More you must not demand of us."

Madame Legier wrote two letters—one to Léon in which she said if he was sure of getting £500 a year, and the girl was healthy—and agreed to bring up the children as Catholics—she supposed it was better to close with it,

though Heaven knew how they would fit things in, the English temperament being as stubborn as wood, and his father most unaccommodating when he was there; and another letter to Rose in which she welcomed her into the family and said what confidence she had in Léon's choice and how she and her husband looked forward to the brightening of their future lives by the sight of their children's happiness.

Monsieur Legier wrote a third letter which Mrs. Pinsent translated to her husband. He said something about a lawyer in it, but Mr. Pinsent said nothing would induce him to see a French lawyer, English ones were bad enough.

Rose didn't give anybody time to do much more. She announced that she wanted to be married at once and spend her honeymoon at Capri.

She could buy what she needed in Rome and finish getting her trousseau together in Paris.

She had set her heart on going to Capri for her honeymoon and there wasn't any use anybody saying anything.

She didn't even pay much attention to Léon, who ventured on one occasion to wonder if Capri was very gay?

"We shan't want to be gay," Rose said a little soberly. "We shall just be perfectly happy."

Léon said no more. Of course he expected to be happy, but he had never in his life been happy when he wasn't a little gay.

Rose saw very little of Léon during their tiny engagement. They were both immersed in preparations for the wedding, but the little she saw was like the vision of a Fairy Prince.

He was gallant, delicate and intent. Nothing about Rose escaped him. He knew with a marvellous tact from moment to moment what would please her best.

It was (but of course Rose didn't know this) the correct attitude for a Frenchman engaged to be married.

As the marriage approached, Mrs. Pinsent had moments of secret doubt. She knew it was very silly of her, but

Rose was her youngest child, and marriage by two consuls and a Cardinal wasn't at all like being married properly in your own church at home.

She went so far one evening as to go into Rose's bedroom under the pretext of borrowing her hairbrush, just to see if her child was quite happy. Mrs. Pinsent's hair was long and thick like Rose's, it had been the same colour when she was Rose's age. She sat in an armchair by the bed and thought that Rose, whose hair was done in two long plaits, looked terribly like she used to look when she was ten years old.

"My dear," she said, "I like Léon so much." Rose smiled and blushed and snuggled further into the rather hard second pillow reluctantly conceded to her by the Hotel le Roy.

"Yes, Mamma, I know," she said, "and he loves you—isn't it nice?"

Mrs. Pinsent reflected. "All the same," she said, "men are very strange. I mean even our own men. You'd think you could tell what they're like before you are married to them, but you can't—you don't even know for quite a long time afterwards."

Rose looked unconcerned. "It's so funny," she said, "but I feel as if I knew Léon better than if he was an Englishman. You see, he tells me more. I can't quite put it to you, so that you can understand, but I think it's his being so much more expressive."

"Yes," said Mrs. Pinsent. "Only that isn't what I mean, you know. I wasn't thinking of what they said, any of them. I don't think you can go by that; when they're in love, they'll say anything."

Rose hesitated. "But, Mamma," she said, "don't men—don't they *ever* stay in love?"

Mrs. Pinsent resorted hastily to the hairbrush. Almost all married women dislike this question.

"Of course, in a sense," she admitted. "But when they get used to you they aren't always very easy to hold."

Rose sat up very straight and thin. "How do you mean—*hold*?" she asked

quickly. Mrs. Pinsent brushed her hair well over her face. She hoped Rose wasn't thinking about her father. It was an unnecessary fear, Rose wasn't thinking about anyone but Léon.

"Well," Mrs. Pinsent explained, "I think there comes a time in almost all happy marriages when a man has almost too much of what he wants. He gets, if one isn't very careful, and perhaps even if one is—a little—a little restive and bored. You see, men never have as much to amuse themselves with as women have—and that makes them take more interest in what they *do* like even if it isn't good for them—and other women (whom they wouldn't really care for a bit—if they saw enough of them) may make an appeal to them just because they're *not* their wives. Of course, it mayn't be at all like this with Léon, dear, only you're going so far away from us—and he's a Frenchman, and perhaps they don't think of marriage quite as we do. I have never read Zola, of course, but I believe there is rather a difference in the point of view." Mrs. Pinsent faltered—she felt through the cascade of her hair—Rose's inflexible eyes.

"What would you do, Mamma," Rose asked quietly, "if anything—happened like that?"

Mrs. Pinsent drew a long breath. For a moment she was almost sorry that Bernard Shaw hadn't had a sharper effect upon her daughter's imagination. Mrs. Pinsent wasn't anxious to explain what she would do. She only wanted to be vague, and at the same time helpful; her own case had been quite different, there had been the children, and, besides, Mr. Pinsent wasn't French.

"We rather thought," she said, "of staying on for some time in Rome, and then going to Paris for the first part of the summer. We should be quite near you then—and Agatha could go back to England for her tennis."

"I couldn't ever leave Léon," Rose said strangely, "whatever happened."

"No, dear, of course not," said Mrs. Pinsent soothingly, then she started

quite afresh and began plaiting her hair.

"Your father wanted me to tell you," she said, "that he's going to have your allowance settled upon you—and upon your children—that's £500 a year, and later on you'll have even more, of course, like your sisters, but the money is in an English bank, and it is quite your own, but you're to have trustees as well, your father has seen to all that. Léon was so nice about it. I knew he would be. He's been so generous and charming and most thoughtful." Mrs. Pinsent got up and bent over her daughter. "You are happy, Rose?" she whispered. "You do feel safe?"

Rose lifted her undeterred, terribly triumphant eyes to her mother's. "I feel as safe," she said, "as if an angel loved me."

CHAPTER VI

EVERYTHING had been done, the last trunk was packed, the last joke, not a very good one, accomplished by Agatha. The two elder sisters, tired out and unequal to their natural play of spirits, had gone to bed.

Rose flew downstairs to the telephone. The Swiss manageress, a sharp-tongued, good-hearted woman, rose wearily and shouted through the receiver. After a violent exchange of reproaches with an irate porter at the other end, she accomplished the feat of getting hold of Léon, and put the receiver into the girl's hand. "He is there, Mademoiselle," she said with a curious glance at the girl's flushed face.

"Oh, thank you," Rose murmured. "Léon, Léon, are you there?"

"But it is Rose?" His voice answered a little as if he was surprised that it was Rose.

"Yes," she said quickly, "I want to see you. Can you come at once?"

"Something has happened?" he asked anxiously. "Something has gone wrong?"

Rose reassured him. "Oh, no—nothing, but I felt suddenly as if I *must* see you."

There was a moment's pause, a buzz-

ing sound came across the wires, and then Rose heard a strange voice—it sounded like a woman's—saying very slowly, "*Mais—c'est la dernière nuit?*" And then Léon's again, "I am very busy to-night, Rose—this that you want to see me about, is it important?"

She was surprised at his hesitation, and surprised at her own insistence. It seemed to her suddenly very important that she should insist. "Please, please come," she said urgently. There was another pause, then Léon said again, "Is it a command?"

A moment earlier she would not have said that it was a command, but her wish to see him had been mysteriously sharpened into a strange, imperative instinct.

"Isn't my wish a command?" she asked, trying to laugh. But Léon did not echo her laughter. "Very well, then," he said, "in ten minutes."

The big red salon was empty. For the first time Rose noticed the yellow lamp, the blue velvet tablecloth, the enormous imperishable roses in bulging angular vases under the great gilt mirror.

She had been so happy all these weeks she hadn't really seen what anything was like, and she had hardly ever been alone for ten minutes. Now she was alone. She remembered with a little smile that Léon had once said of the salon that as an interior it was not seductive.

The Pinsents did not use irony, but Rose thought she rather liked it. In ten minutes precisely Léon was with her. Fortunately Madame de Bren-teuil had gone to bed.

Léon entered quickly, looking about him as if he had expected one or more of the Pinsent family to be in attendance. Only Rose, feeling suddenly rather small and very far away, stood under an imitation palm close by the mantel-piece.

Léon took her hands, kissed them, pressing them, and letting them go in one quick movement.

"I am here," he said, drawing a seat up close to her. "Well—what is this

thing that has suddenly become necessary for us to talk about?"

Rose looked at him questioningly. Really she hardly knew what it was that she wanted to see him for, perhaps it was after all only to see him! To count over her riches, to feel the wonderful golden coins slip through her eager fingers. Only now as she met his eyes it seemed to her that he shut her out. He had a strange hard look, and though he smiled, his smile itself had a new quality, a quality which seemed to put her a little to one side. "I don't quite know, Léon," she murmured. "I did want to see you—but I think I must have had some reason."

Léon glanced through the glass door of the salon at the back of the Manageress' head. "Let us hope so," he said cheerfully. "for it is ten o'clock and I see no one here but Madame at the Bureau."

"Father was here—but I sent him away," Rose explained conscientiously.

Léon gave an odd little laugh. "To-night," he said, "you are very imperative. But you see we are all your slaves. He went—I came—well—what do you wish of us?"

"Léon," she whispered, frightened by the coldness of his voice, "weren't you glad to come?"

He gave himself a tiny shake as if he were trying to pull himself into a fresh frame of mind.

"But of course," he said, "you are adorable." To a critical ear his tone lacked conviction, but Rose's ear was not critical; that is to say, not yet. She gave a little sigh of relief.

"I think I know now what it was I meant to say," she stated. "Mamma has been talking to me about marriage."

"Ah—!" said Léon quickly.

"Something she said," Rose continued, "made me wonder. You see, I had always supposed when you were in love—that was enough. But what she said made me wonder if perhaps it didn't matter a good deal *how?*"

Léon looked a trifle puzzled, but he was also amused, his hardness was beginning to melt under the spell of her

wistful loveliness; something—some other spell, perhaps, receded from him.

"*Bien sur*," he murmured, looking into her eyes. "It matters how one loves."

"And I couldn't help thinking," Rose went on with gathering confidence, "that you knew rather more about it than I do."

Léon's eyes flickered under the yellow lamps. It was almost as if they were laughing at her.

"Yes," he said caressingly, "yes—that is always possible."

"You see," Rose explained, "all along I have felt as if you knew me, and what I wanted, and how you could please me, so astonishingly well."

Léon smiled. He did not tell her that compared to other women—many other women—she was easy to please.

"Of course," Rose went on, "in a way I understand you. I told Mamma that! Better than if you were English, because we've talked so much, you see—but I'm not sure—not quite sure—that I know all the things you don't like."

"What I wanted to ask you to-night was—will you always tell me what you want and not mind if I'm stupid and don't know things until you tell me? You need never tell me more than once—I shall always remember."

She had touched him now, touched him so much that he sprang to his feet and walked hastily to the window. She could not see his face. She waited patiently and a little anxiously for him to come back to her. He said, when he came back, and stood behind her chair:

"You are adorable," but he said it quite differently, he said it as if he really found her adorable. "It is true," he said at last, very gently and tenderly. "There are things that we must teach each other, and to-night I will teach you one of them. You should not have sent for me here."

"Ah, but why, Léon?" she cried. "It was just the last night"—her voice faltered—some queer little trick of the brain forced into her memory the voice she had heard on the telephone. That

woman, too, had said to somebody that it was the last night.

"In the first place," he said, still gently, but a little gravely, "you should not have seen me at all—on the evening before our marriage, it is the reason itself! You should have spent it with your mother and sisters. It surprised me—it surprised me very much—you sending for me."

She flushed crimson. "Do not think I blame you," he said quickly. "But I am a Frenchman, and you must learn a little how we think." Rose bowed her head. "And in the second place," he said, "my very dear child—you must not constrain me to come to you—it is my delight—my joy to be with you—be very careful that you never make it my duty! I am your lover—to-morrow I shall be your husband. So—so you will remember, never try to constrain me to be with you—let me come, let me go, do not try to hold me, and do not seek to know where I have been."

"But," she cried eagerly, "Léon—I didn't mean to do anything like that! I—I was frightened. I wanted you! Just to see you! I never will again—I mean—I don't think—do you?—I shall ever be frightened again. It wasn't that I meant to—oh, what a horrible word!—constrain you—only I thought you would be alone and wanting me, too!"

"*Mon Dieu!*" he cried, with sudden exasperation. "Of course I want you!"

She drew back a little from the savage light in his eyes—he had caught her arm suddenly and roughly—but in an instant he had himself in hand. "Now I am going," he said. "You are not to be frightened any more. You are mine, my sweetheart, my wife, my darling! How I love the pretty English words!—and you will love a little your funny French husband, will you not?—and forgive him, if you do not always understand him."

He took her very gently in his arms, and kissed her troubled eyes and put his lips lingeringly and tenderly to hers. There were tears on her eyelashes, but she smiled bravely up at him. "I will

never forget what you have said," she murmured, "and I will love you always."

Then he went away. After he had gone, it occurred to Rose that she was to belong to him, but if they were to be happy he must not belong to her. She did not put it quite as sharply as this, but she reminded herself that the great thing was for Léon never to feel bound.

Madame came in from the bureau to put out the lights. "You will not need them any more, Mademoiselle," she asked, "now that Monsieur has gone?"

"No," said Rose. "Thank you very much. Madame, are you French?"

"No, Mademoiselle," the Manageress replied. "I am a Swiss from Basle."

"But you know French people?" Rose insisted.

Madame shrugged her shoulders. "I know most people," she observed. "Even Arabs, I once kept a hotel in Egypt; but why do you ask, Mademoiselle?"

"I wondered," Rose said, "if you thought them—the French, I mean—very difficult to please?"

"No people are easy to please," Madame replied, putting out the lights with a sharp twist, as if she disliked them. "And all are unpleasant when they are not pleased. I do not say the French are more unpleasant than the others. They know what they are about and they don't ask for the moon and expect to get it for two sous, but what they ask for—that they do expect to get no matter what it costs others that they should have it. In general, I find the French have very little heart. I have no complaint to make against them. They are orderly, they do not waste time, they have the sense of how to behave. But I find it is better to expect nothing from them, and to remain independent. Is there anything further you require, Mademoiselle?"

Rose thanked her again and turned thoughtfully away. Madame, with the last switch in her hand, looked curiously after her. "The English," she said to herself, "are not practical. Neverthe-

less, Madame de Breteuil is quite wrong about them. They mean no harm. The whole family Pinsent walks about with its eyes shut, as innocent as the newly baptized. They are a race of mystics without manners. It is what comes of a meat breakfast so early in the morning. The senses become clogged. I must not forget to remind Alfonso that the father Pinsent wants bacon with his eggs."

CHAPTER VII

THEY had been married a week—a tremulous, ecstatic, amazing week.

It seemed to Rose made up of all the laughing colours of the sea.

They were surrounded by the sea, clear and limpid as a shallow pool, the great deep bay gleamed and shone about them.

Out of it the Islands rose like flowers. Capri uneven, wild and blue, Ischia tulip-shaped and tall—Posilippo and its attendant isles like a fallen spray of blossoms; and in Capri itself the whole spring lay bare to the sun.

The South was like Léon—it was beautiful, but it was strange.

On their first evening they had driven swiftly up the hillside; the air was cold and keen; the small mountain ponies galloped through the quick-falling darkness and just for a moment a breath of fear touched the triumphant bride.

She longed for something familiar, something that wasn't even beautiful, but to which she had grown accustomed. She didn't put it to herself quite like that—she only wished she hadn't had to leave her fox terrier at home.

The moment passed and other richer moments took its place.

Love was just—what without expecting it Rose had most desired. No one could have expected anyone to be as wonderful as Léon. He split his soul into his passion, his ardour filled their hours, there was no way in which he did not colour her life. She felt herself like some poor common pebble transformed into purple and rose colour by the touch of the sea.

It never occurred to her that when the tide recedes the colour goes. She did not know that Léon's passion was a tide, and she did not believe that it would ever recede.

They explored everything in Capri, the ruins of Tiberius' villas, the many coloured grottos, the little stray paths that led between high walls to the heights of Capri—and everything they saw Rose loved. But best of all she loved their own familiar garden of the Hotel Paradiso, where Léon taught her to smoke cigarettes, surrounded by violets, and where the stars swooped down on them in the velvet dark evenings, leaning just over the tops of the little stunted trees.

She had everything she wanted then, but most of all she had Léon, rarer and sweeter than the violets, more astonishing and limitless than the southern stars.

Of course he had his faults. Rose accepted their limits of natural frailty with eager tenderness.

He was jealous, fierce and a little hard on anything that interfered with his crowning absorption. Rose had heard him speak with cold, incisive sharpness to a waiter who interrupted one of their soft, interminable garden intimacies; and Léon was indifferent, intensely indifferent—to anything or anyone but her.

She couldn't be said to mind it, but she noticed it; it made her hope that nothing would ever happen to her—it would be so awful if it did—for Léon.

Then one day he ran up the outside staircase which led to their rooms with a peculiar, excited expression in his eyes. Rose came out to meet him, and together they leaned over the balcony.

"Such a funny thing has happened," he explained. "I've met an old friend, isn't it strange?—he is here also on his honeymoon. The wife—I had not met before—you must know them. I have asked them to-morrow to tea."

Rose hid a moment's dissatisfaction. "Are they French, Léon?" she asked a little nervously.

"But of course, yes, Parisians of the

most Parisian. Do you object to that?" he demanded impatiently.

"Oh, no!" she explained. "Only you know, Léon dear, my French is so bad!"

He didn't say it was adorable, which was what he usually said, though he never allowed her to attempt it when they were together. "It is time you learned French," he said. "You can't go on like this." Then he looked at her with strange critical eyes. "You mustn't wear that to-morrow," he said coldly. "What have you got that you can wear? Madame Gérard—dresses."

Rose flushed. "Dearest," she answered, "you know everything I've got—I thought you liked my clothes—they were all I could get in Rome."

"They are, nevertheless, extremely poor," Léon pronounced with an air of finality. "I can't think why you have no manner of putting on your clothes. There is no character in them, no charm, no unexpectedness. You dress as if you wanted shelter from the cold. Also none of your things have any seduction—they are as dull as boiled eggs. You cannot live in Paris and dress like an English country miss."

Rose felt as if she would die if Léon would not get that cold look out of his eyes. She lost her head under his impassive scrutiny. "Must I meet them?" she pleaded. "The Gérards, I mean. They don't sound a bit my kind of people."

"But of course you must meet them!" said Léon angrily. "Naturally, since you are my wife—you are not my mistress, to be hidden away at such a time!"

"Léon!" Rose exclaimed—his words struck at her like a whip lash. She turned quickly away and went into their room. She felt as if she could not stay any longer with Léon. In five minutes he rejoined her—not the strange, disagreeable man who had spoken to her like that, but her husband Léon. He was full of tender apologies. He couldn't, he explained, think what had made him so nervous. Perhaps it was because Capri was so quiet, one resented anything that broke into it. But,

after all, after to-morrow they need see very little of the Gérards—Raoul wasn't a great friend of his—he was, however, an interesting man—a well-known and very fine singer. He was a good deal thought of in Paris. Perhaps one day he would sing to them. Madame also was musical. She adored her husband's voice.

Rose said that would be lovely, and she asked Léon how long the Gérards' honeymoon had lasted. Léon said longer than theirs—a fortnight or three weeks, perhaps.

It was Madame's idea, Capri. They had taken a villa so that Raoul could practise comfortably. Raoul would naturally have preferred Naples. "She is romantic, however, like you," Léon murmured, kissing Rose's soft white throat.

Then he sighed a little and moved restlessly about the room. "For Raoul," he murmured, "I am not so sure. Capri isn't very gay." This was the second time Léon had mentioned the lack of this quality in Capri, and neither time had Rose paid any attention to it. She was not a Frenchwoman, and she had no idea that Léon attached any particular weight to the idea of gaiety.

Léon kissed her again. This time he did it a little remorsefully.

They were to have tea in the garden under the almond blossom trees. Léon was to go into Capri and return early with cakes and roses, but before he went he inspected Rose's dressing table. He frowned helplessly at her dreadful lack of accessories.

"Before she goes," he explained to Rose, "Madame will no doubt wish to tidy her hair and readjust her veil. Why is it you have nothing here?"

Rose gazed at him. "But, Léon," she said gently, "I have pins and brushes."

Léon exploded suddenly into one of his picturesque whiffs of anger. "Mon Dieu! Are you a woman at all?" he exclaimed. "You have no powder, no rouge, no scent. You have nothing here on your dressing table that a woman should have! Oh, you everlasting creature of soap and fresh air! How can I

explain you? How can I explain anything? I shall go mad!"

Afterwards he calmed down. He would, he explained, buy what he could get at Capri. Fortunately Rose did have silver-topped boxes and bottles; these could be filled to look as natural as possible.

Rose agreed; she would have agreed to anything to please him, but she was surprised at the amount of things Léon apparently considered a Frenchwoman would find necessary in order to reassume her veil and tidy her hair after a tea party. Besides, Rose didn't like scent.

At half-past four Madame Gérard appeared, her husband strolling a little behind her.

Two impressions flashed simultaneously upon Rose; one was that Madame Gérard, though distinctly smart, wasn't particularly pretty, and the other, that in spite of her lovely clothes, her new husband, and the romance of Capri, she hadn't got happy eyes.

Her other impressions of Madame Gérard she formed more slowly.

Monsieur Gérard she instantly and wholly disliked.

He was much older than his wife, and had a bored, conceited air, and rather thick red lips.

He stared a great deal at Rose, and said several times over, when Léon introduced him to her, that he was very much impressed.

Madame was charming; she was charming about the garden, about the tea, about the wonderful English nation, and about Capri; but she was charming in Parisian French. Neither of the Gérards knew a word of English, and Madame spoke in a cascade of little soft, vanishing sounds, the significance of which poor nervous, attentive Rose couldn't possibly catch.

Monsieur Gérard, on the other hand, made three separate emphatic attempts to talk to Rose. Rose blushed and frowned and didn't suppose for a single instant that she had understood what he said. She wouldn't have liked it at all if she had, but of course men

couldn't say such things to ladies to whom they had just been introduced.

What was strange was that she could, she always bewilderingly had been able to understand Léon's French, however fast or complicated the rush of his talk might be, and what was so odd, so uncomfortable and bewildering was that Léon was saying really dreadful things to Madame Gérard. Not that Madame Gérard minded, on the contrary she seemed particularly stimulated by Léon's vivid attentions. Nor that Monsieur Gérard minded, either; he gave up his endeavours with Rose, and seemed to resign himself to a silent but perfectly good-tempered peace. He seemed, though the idea was as preposterous as everything else, to feel like a sentry who has just been relieved after a too protracted exposure at a difficult post. He ate heartily, and when he had finished he asked permission to smoke, once or twice he hummed something under his breath.

It was perfectly natural that Léon should not notice Rose, you can't in public single out your wife for attention, and Madame Gérard made the most valiant efforts to include her.

Expressive, gesticulating, infinitely gay, Madame drew, or strove to draw, the poor dull little English wife into the swift current of their talk, but she did not succeed, partly, no doubt, because Rose was shy, but partly also because Léon markedly wished to keep her out.

Rose kept out. She made herself as busy as she could pouring out tea and handing cake, then she leaned back in her chair and tried to look as if she enjoyed hearing Léon and Madame—what?—you couldn't call it exactly talk.

That was the difficulty. It was more of a game than a conversation, and a game whose rules Rose had never learnt.

Monsieur Gérard got up after a time, and asked if Madame would excuse him—might he examine the planting of the lemons? He was madly interested in lemons.

Rose gladly excused him. She heard

Léon ask Madame Gérard if this statement of her husband's was true.

"Never in the world!" Madame gaily replied. "He does not know the difference between a lemon and an orange!"

"Then let us," said Léon, "also go and examine something we do not understand."

Rose stayed where she was. Something had happened to her little secret lovely garden, it was like something exquisite which has been suddenly vulgarised and spoilt.

The scent of the lemons, delicate and pungent, made her head ache. The pigeons came to her, when the others had gone, and she fed them from the crumbs of her first party. She had always thought it would be so delightful to give a party with Léon, but she had not supposed that the party, as far as she was concerned, would be composed exclusively of pigeons.

CHAPTER VIII

AN affair of importance had brought Monsieur Gérard to the Hotel Paradiso. He excused himself to Rose for wishing to consult her husband privately. Rose accepted his excuses sedately and retired to her balcony.

She liked Léon to be consulted. It showed how wise he was, that an older man, even if he wasn't very nice, should stand in need of his judgment.

It was very interesting to watch the two men walking up and down the garden. Léon slim and smart, with his little unconscious air of having arrived without premeditation at the perfection of appearance. Monsieur Gérard heavy, with a kind of sleepy uncertainty in his movements, and the effect of forcible compression about the waist. There was something to Rose very repulsive in the muffled greediness of Monsieur Gérard's expression. He looked at once selfish and burdened; it made her nervous to see the two men together—for she had an idea that the burdens of the selfish are apt to be easily transferred.

She could not hear what they said, but she could see they were saying a tremendous amount. First Monsieur Gérard would begin emphatically with a puffy white forefinger attacking the air. His shoulders, his eyebrows, his hat were volcanically active, speech broke from him in a cascade as overwhelming and magnificent as the Tivoli Falls. Then he would pull himself up abruptly, broken in upon by another torrent from Léon. Even when they listened to each other their attention was as vivid as speech, and they were capable at moments of catching each other's speech without discontinuing the rapid flow of their own.

Rose thought their conversation must be about an opera; and she was sure that if the opera was like their conversation it would be very exciting.

There were moments when she thought the two men were angry, there were others when the emotion between them seemed to rise up like a sudden wind and possess the garden.

On the whole it was Léon who was the most excited—he repeatedly said "Non!"—but even from the balcony Rose gathered in his passionate negative a reluctance for it to be taken as final.

They parted with great affection; there was gratitude in Monsieur Gérard's attitude, and there was protection and soothing in that of Léon's. "But above all," she heard her husband say, "with women one must be practical." They shook hands three times, then Monsieur Gérard waved his hat to Rose and hurried out of the garden.

Léon rejoined her, lighting a cigarette; his hands trembled a little, his eyes were intensely bright. It struck Rose that he was restless, more restless than usual.

He hummed a little tune to himself and then, breaking off suddenly, told her to bring him out her best hat.

"It has an air," he explained, "quite too much of the Sunday. I want to eradicate it! A tranquil hat afflicts me! It has no power to move the heart. In a hat, one should have peril. It should

not be an accident, I admit many are! But it should have an intention with a hint of danger. Pass me the scissors."

Rose passed him the scissors. "I hope," she ventured, "that Monsieur Gérard hadn't anything dreadful to say."

She thought it couldn't have been very dreadful, for Léon was looking distinctly pleased.

However, he put a decent amount of gravity into the headshake with which he answered her.

"Everything is of the most complicated," he assured her. "The affair Gérard has literally come to pieces. The marriage has as little integrity as the inside of a volcano. They walk on broken glass. It is no longer a honeymoon—it is an inferno!"

Rose cried out in horror. "But what has happened to them?" she asked anxiously.

"It is a long story," said Léon, who had by now completely unpicked her hat and was trying the trimming upside down, and rather liking the effect. "But I shall tell you as much as I can. One must make the troubles of others one's own—must we not? Both our religions agree upon that. Non?"

"It appears, in the first instance, the marriage was of Madame's making.

"She had the idea—common to many women—that she was born to be the wife of a great artist. As a matter of fact, no women are born for that, because no great artist should have a wife. They should have from time to time a tragic union with a mistress—that develops them; wives do not. Raoul was the only artist Madame knew. She was twenty-three, an heiress, and as you see for yourself a charming little woman of the world. She made a good impression upon Raoul. He discovered that marriage with her would have a solid foundation. Now he has got it and naturally he does not know what to do with it. Above all he finds that Madame considers herself ill-used. She is, as I told you before, romantic. She expected a grand passion, she knew him capable of one, but she did not grasp

that it could never be in her direction.

"I find it myself a little bourgeois of her to expect Raoul to develop such a thing for a wife. Do not look so like the Sunday hat, dear Rose! Remember their marriage was a French one. Ours in English—therefore we were in love. Still, of course, both were marriages!" Léon manipulated the hat afresh, it was beginning to look less and less like Sunday. Rose said nothing. She had a silly feeling that if she spoke she might cry. She was very sorry for Madame Gérard.

"That, then, is the grievance of Madame," Léon went on. "She is young, excitable and disappointed. You have that on one side. I must say that I think she lacks management, but for all that one sympathises with her.

"His grievance is, however, more serious still. Because he has no grand passion for her, Madame turns round and asserts that there is no real marriage between them!—that, in short, if she cannot have the silver moon, she won't be put off with very good cheese of the day. You follow me? She does not wish to be a wife to Raoul."

"Oh," cried Rose incredulously, "oh, Léon, surely Monsieur Gérard did not tell you this about his *wife*?"

"But yes—" said Léon calmly, "why not? I, however, consider that if Madame lacks management, Raoul lacks *souplesse*. Things should never have been allowed to reach such a sharpness. I don't say he could have given her a grand passion, one can't invent such things, but he might, all the same, have lent himself to the situation during the honeymoon. If a good woman cannot have a honeymoon, what can she have? The type will die out if they are to be starved all round."

"Do you mean to say you want him to pretend?" Rose asked. She spoke quietly, but the feeling behind her words made Léon throw down the hat and catch her hands in his.

"Ah!" he said, "you Queen of the Puritans! No! not pretend—but he might—mightn't he?—have for the mo-

ment have gone a trifle in advance of the facts?"

Rose withdrew her hand from his. "It seems to me," she said, "all of it, simply horrible! I don't understand. How could he come here and tell you such things—to talk about his wife and her feelings? Why, it's all so incredibly *private*! It's as dreadful as if he'd killed her. I don't think I should have minded it half so much if he had. And what is the *use* of it, Léon—why did he come to you?"

"Ah, that is why I told you at all," Léon explained, a little crestfallen. "Of course, I knew you would shrink from this affair. It is natural that you should, though I cannot, for my part, see why, in a strange land, surrounded by Italians, the poor Raoul shouldn't be allowed to consult a compatriot and a friend. However, it is really for my assistance that he came, and I cannot give him that, Rose, without your consent. It is simply a question of whether or no you are sufficiently magnanimous."

"How do you mean?" asked Rose, more frightened still. "You know I can't talk French properly, and if I could I shouldn't know what to say to people like that!"

"Oh, I didn't ask you to mix yourself up in it," Léon answered reassuringly. "It is, however, perhaps even harder for most women—what I have to ask of you! It is to stand aside and let me mix myself up in it."

She shivered a little. "Oh, but why," she asked, "should you be mixed up in it? We only saw them yesterday!"

Léon picked up the hat again. "It appears," he said, "that I managed to entertain Madame yesterday. Poor thing! she has been living the life of a tortured Romantic. For the first time Raoul heard her laugh, saw her smile, and he became attracted by the idea. He thought if I managed to amuse her a little, she would be less tragic, and then, after a time, she might submit her case to me, and I could, little by little, you know, much as I have done with this hat—a feather here, a ribbon

there, readjust the situation. Such things have been done, you know, by people of tact, and to save a marriage when one has oneself made such a success of one's own—isn't that a duty one perhaps owes, in return for one's happiness?"

Rose thought the situation over, that is to say, she felt it over. Here and there her heart winced under the probes she gave it. She knew that Léon was magnificent, and she felt humiliatingly conscious that she was not as magnificent as Léon. She saw plainly enough what was required of her. She was to stand aside for the sake of these strangers, she was to give up her honeymoon, she was to be alone, and to let Léon spend his time with this French lady, who was charming, and whom she could not understand. She remembered what Léon had said, that he must not be constrained, she remembered it perhaps too well. Her whole being centred in the desire to leave him free.

She shut her eyes and prayed. Léon did not know that she was praying, but he felt a little uncomfortable. He was deeply sorry for the Gérards, but there was no doubt that their complications had made the Island of Capri more amusing.

Rose opened her eyes wide. "Léon," she said, "I want you to do whatever you think right, and I will help you all I can."

He kissed her joyously. "There," he said, "the perfect wife! What a pity Madame cannot hear you! She would see the path of happiness without a lesson! Of course you will help me. You will help me profoundly. Day by day I shall bring you the history of my little attempt. It is on your advice I will lean, the drama of it will be for both of us an immense resource, and I have a feeling that for all of us it will have a happy ending!"

Rose did not share the feeling. She picked up the hat which he had finished and tried it on. "It is very French," she said doubtfully, "but does it really suit me, Léon?"

"Ah, you must make it suit you," said

Léon a little ironically. "I cannot help you to that! It's all a question of how you wear it!"

CHAPTER IX

LÉON had, from the first, the best intentions. He was to be the good comrade to Raoul, the sympathetic counselor to Madame, and for the situation in general a happy blend of the olive branch, a dove, and a rainbow in the heavens!

His shrewdness of judgment was only to be matched by the lightness of his heart. For a month many of his most salient gifts had been lying idle. Rose had not asked for management, and there had been in their easy-going lovemaking no very great place for tact.

Léon was on the look-out for difficulty, for gulfs of temperament and training, efforts and sacrifices and gently taught lessons, but after a time his look-out ceased. Rose looked out. She made the efforts, she learned his lessons, before the need arose to teach her. In fact, she saved him trouble, and there had been moments when Léon found this a trifle dull. It was different now; his skill was called upon at every turn. Madame Gérard was a very unhappy woman. She had had a spoilt childhood and a sentimental and enthusiastic youth guarded at every point from experience.

All her adventures had been in her unfettered dreams. She had dreamed that she should marry Raoul, and then she had married him. Life had brought her up very short. She had believed in an exquisite and ideal relationship and she had been given with terrible promptitude Monsieur Gérard's impression of what constituted the marriage tie.

He had spoilt her dreams, he had shaken about her ears the fulness of her life; but he was still the man she loved. All other men were but as trees walking, even Léon was only a tree that walked. It was true that he walked more and more frequently in her direction. She took a certain notice of him, her heart lay in the dust and it began

to mean something to her that Léon resented this. She felt through the bitterness of her shame a tiny spark of returning pride.

It was a very tiny spark, it hardly amounted to self-respect—but Léon guarded it and kept it alight, as a man shields a flickering match from the rough air. He flattered her grossly at first because she was too sad to understand subtlety. Afterwards, as her mind turned towards him, he refined his flatteries. He kept her a little hungry so that she should more and more look to him for this nourishment of the spirit.

But Madame Gérard, in spite of her grief, was a kind-hearted little woman. She remembered Rose.

"We must not neglect her," she would say gently, "the little English wife. One does not cure one unhappiness by making another." And Léon would explain that the English were a strange race. They loved solitude, speechlessness and wonderful long newspaper articles about politics. Also Rose was learning French from a nun and she didn't care to make a third in their little amusements until she could talk more freely with them.

"She has a pride about it," Léon explained. "These cold, silent women are very proud."

"I should not have thought her cold," said Madame Gérard, thoughtfully. "She has kind eyes. When one is very unhappy one notices kind eyes."

Léon led the conversation back to Madame's unhappiness and away from Rose's eyes. He had not meant to be disloyal to Rose, he rather liked to think of her as cold and proud. After a time Madame no longer tried to send him back to Rose; she was a Frenchwoman, even if she was broken hearted, and she was not slow to understand Léon. "This type," she said to herself, "will always be with some woman or other—with me he is safe! I shall send him back to her as he came—even perhaps a little wiser, a little more appreciative of her. I will do her no bad turn, the little English wife."

Madame Gérard had the best inten-

tions, too. She had even better ones than Léon, but neither of them perceived that they had them in the wrong direction. Nevertheless, for a time all went well. Monsieur Gérard studied for the coming opera season with a freer mind and in a better temper.

Rose took long lessons from the nun, and as she slowly and painstakingly began to master the intricate and exquisite language of her husband she felt as if she were approaching his spirit, and preparing for herself and for him a fresh world of understanding and companionship. Day by day Léon brought her, with fresh enthusiasm, endless stories of his progress with the affair Gérard. Some instinct in Rose told her that by the length of these stories, and by Léon's absorbed, invigorated returns to her, their love was still safe.

She needed all the assurances that she could get, for she was very much alone. She was always just the same to Léon; she spread about him the warm, wide sea of her magnanimity; he was never to know she felt sad or strange, or that she had a silly habit of almost crying when she walked alone on the cliffs above the bright, transparent sea.

He wasn't to dream that she minded his boating and driving and walking with Madame Gérard, or that she kept explaining to herself how natural it was for him to talk more and with more gaiety in French, and not to care so much as he used to for moonlight in the garden.

She succeeded so entirely in the effect of appearing not to mind that she thoroughly annoyed Léon.

He had been looking forward to a fresh drama with Rose, a little visible but not fettering jealousy, a scene or two, even a few tears, wise and tender explanation on his part, and passionate pleading upon her own.

But Rose's passion was very quiet and it never occurred to it to plead.

She had no such intention, but she made Léon's vanity smart, under her daily serenity. "Is she made of wood—or of iron," he asked himself bitter-

ly, "that she lets me live in the pocket of another woman even during the honeymoon? What have I to look forward to—centuries of ice?"

He knew very well that there was no ice in Rose, but his bad conscience enjoyed resentment very much. It was not only his vanity that was injured, he began to be conscious of a secret fear.

Rose was to be his guardian angel in this affair—he mustn't, whatever happened, be allowed to lose his head.

He didn't expect his wife to stop his doing what he wanted, but she ought to be so effective, so in the centre of things as to prevent his wanting it, and Rose wouldn't come into the centre of things. She remained in the background, trusting him. He felt the burden of her confidence checking him at every turn.

There was danger, and she didn't see danger. Was she going to walk straight through it, with her wonderful blue eyes forever unaware?

She ought to have realized that however noble a man is, and however unhappy a woman, a situation in which, from the best motives, they are constantly thrown together, needs watching. A most unfortunate thing had already happened. Madame had discovered, from an unguarded remark of Léon's, that he had talked with her husband about her. Madame Gérard had a constructive mind—if two and two were anywhere about, it did not take her long to arrive at four. Instantly she understood: this new companionship, the devout attention of her husband's friend was nothing at all but a plot between the two men to play with her broken heart!

She knew their aim; it was to make her compliant to the lowest needs of one who had not so much affection for her as a stray dog for the hand that strokes it. To say that Madame Gérard was angry at this discovery is to under-estimate the uses of language. She was attacked by a bitter fury of outraged pride. Léon had brought back her pride, then, simply in order to outrage it! But this time she kept

her head. Any woman can keep her head with a man with whom she is not in love.

Madame Gérard knew herself to be standing with her back to the wall, fighting for her life against two men, one of them at least she could injure.

She gave herself a moment of despair, her small hand clutched fiercely at a little stone beside the path near which they sat—her hidden eyes burned with unshed tears. For a long moment she held herself in silence, while she let Léon cover up his mistake as if she had not heard him; then, being a practical woman, she put despair away till afterwards: besides, despair could only hurt herself.

It was a pity that in destroying Léon's marriage she should have to destroy Rose's. Enraged as she was, she thought of this; still, she couldn't stop to consider a woman who, if she had had the least sense, would have interfered in the whole affair long ago.

"You are not angry," Léon urged, "that I should have touched on your sufferings with the good Raoul?"

Madame laughed softly and looked at Léon with provocative, caressing eyes.

"You who know women—must know how safe you are from me," she replied. "Do I look angry?" She did not look angry, but she looked provocative, and this was the first time that she had looked provocative.

It was the difference between a battery turned on and a battery turned off. Madame Gérard, like all Frenchwomen, could use her sex or sink it as the occasion required. Up till now she had never used it, she had kept it steadily in abeyance out of respect to Rose. Now Rose had to go, respect had to go, everything had to go—but her fierce rage against the two men who were in league against her pride.

It was no wonder that Léon began to be afraid, even though it must be admitted that his fear was chiefly of a pleasurable nature, nor that Monsieur Gérard should suddenly feel that he had evolved rather more help than he needed; nor that Rose should find herself

not only more alone but suddenly deprived of the support of the long histories Léon used to make to her, on his returns.

He could no longer tell her what took place between him and Madame; speech had become a medium for something better not explained.

Madame Gérard was the only one of the group who appeared wholly at her ease; all her energies were being freely used, and in the direction she had chosen for them. She was making her husband jealous, Léon infatuated and giving the stupid English wife plenty of time to learn French.

The good intentions of everybody began to look a little like the fashions of the year before last.

CHAPTER X

It was part of their general attention to the surface of things that Rose was never to appear deserted.

Léon and Madame tore themselves away from her with public reluctance at the garden gate; they rejoined her eagerly like creatures reprieved, after a prolonged but obviously penal absence.

They even arranged between them times and occasions when Monsieur Gérard also should be represented, when the united four, like a procession on parade, strolled before the watching eyes of Capri.

The watching eyes of Capri are indulgently accustomed to youth and change, they are incapable of the element of shock, but they are equally incapable of the delusion of a good appearance. When Capri beheld Rose and Léon issuing from the Hotel Paradiso on their way to a "Thé Intime" at the Villa degli Angeli, Capri was not hoodwinked by this overflow of a dual domesticity, rather it laid a finger to the nose and cried, from one doorway to the other, "Behold!—a festa of knives!"

It was a many-coloured day in the late spring, the bright air shimmered and danced like the bubbles in champagne. The Villa degli Angeli shone

pillow-shaped and glittering in a rose-hung garden. Wistaria streamed from its porch, and cloaked like a shield its romantic lovers' balcony.

Inside the high-ceilinged, gilded little salon, Madame Gérard moved gracefully to and fro—she wore a white dress with touches of scarlet and gold; her lips were very red, her cheeks were lightly powdered, her eyes had a certain sparkle in them, and the heels of her small white shoes were thrillingly high. It struck Rose, not for the first time, that there was really no use being much prettier than that. Madame Gérard greeted Rose with ecstatic pleasure and Léon with a charming ironic gravity; behind her from the gloom Monsieur Gérard moved heavily forward. It was plain that he found the occasion exhausting. Monsieur Gérard easily exhausted most occasions, his was not a revivifying nature; still, there was a certain dignity in the way he murmured over Rose's hand that he was impressed, greatly impressed, by her visit. She remembered that he had been impressed before. Rose would have liked to have said something pleasant in return, but it is difficult to appear full of *savoir faire* when expression is limited to requests for hot water, the superficial qualities of dogs and cats, the time of day, and the habits of railway trains.

Rose could talk quite easily about these things by now, and she was also an expert in weather and could have made herself into a well of sympathy to an invalid, but for ordinary tea-party purposes her French hung fire.

The burden of entertainment fell naturally enough upon Madame. She was equal to it, in all probability she had arranged her rôle in advance.

The week had gone well with her. Monsieur Gérard had been roused from practising operas and from nervous hostility over his matrimonial liabilities. He perceived that at one stroke his liabilities and his security had been snatched from him. He was jealous and had begun to be a little eager; but Madame did not meet him half way.

She no longer bored him to make love to her, indeed she ignored any opening for his attention; she lived exquisitely and extremely unapproachably a life of her own. Monsieur Gérard resented this; he hadn't meant anything so extreme, but he did not see his way to put an end to it. Madame knew perfectly that he was ready to put an end to it, and she had arranged this occasion, both that he might be given his opportunity and that Léon might receive the punishment that he deserved.

Léon had wanted, it appeared, to reunite her to her husband. This was the height of kindness on his part; she would repay him by showing him that his efforts were a little in arrear of the facts. But alas! once more she showed that lack of intelligence to be found in the cleverest of women when they are dealing with the man they love. She understood the man—she had proved it—but she muddled the love. She should have hooked her fish before she dangled it before the exasperated eyes of Léon, and she should have remembered that it was only half a fish—and half an artist. But at first she was satisfied with the rôle of the perfect wife—instantly she succeeded in exasperating Léon. She drew her husband skilfully and prominently into the front of the situation; she did not praise him, but little by little she tapped the fount of his successes.

She laid him out before her guests with delicate touches that were far finer than praise. It was intoxicating for Monsieur Gérard. After a week's complete indifference he found himself a hero in his wife's eyes!

He found himself also in the most comfortable chair in the room (for with men over forty a certain attention must be paid to an appropriate background) and enjoying a wonderful "gouter" in which his talk ruled supreme. Lately Madame had not studied his taste, but for the occasion everything his fancy desired had been obtained for him. His future spread before him in a rosy glow—after all this marriage of his had not been a great

mistake—he rather wished he had not taken Léon into his confidence about it; still, it was amusing to watch the fellow's nose slipping out of joint! He would now have to return to his dull little wife—that would be punishment enough for any man!

Léon was a bad loser; he became first restive, then actively hostile, finally sulky. Madame turned his active hostility into gentle ridicule; his restlessness served somehow to bring out the grand nature of Monsieur Gérard. The grand nature of Monsieur Gérard was not, as a rule, active; and Léon, confronted with a specimen of it, sank into silent resentment.

Even this tent of Achilles was not, however, left to him; it blew this way and that under the delicate raillery of Madame. She noticed that Monsieur was out of spirits?

She attacked Rose about it. "A woman is responsible for all that happens to a man during his honeymoon, is she not?" she asked her. Rose, thinking that Madame was doubtful as to the state of Léon's health, told her painstakingly that Léon was an "esprit fort." Madame, with a happy little shriek, proclaimed that she was sure of it, but was not his wit like Madame's own—this afternoon, at any rate—of the wonderful silent English type? Even Monsieur Gérard laughed at this, but on the whole Madame spared Rose; she kept as far as possible her hand off her. She would gladly have spared her altogether, and, in a sense, of course, she was doing so. She was giving her her husband back—not wiser, nor more appreciative, and certainly in a far worse state of mind—but for all that he would be returned to Rose this afternoon, not so very much the worse for wear, as husbands go.

For half an hour Madame Gérard took upon her little supple shoulders the entertainment of her guests. She was for that half hour like the whole cast of the Comédie Française put together—brilliant, exquisitely decorative and incredibly, ironically knowing; then she turned to her husband with

her eyes like an innocent caress, and said, "Now, *mon ami*, will you not make music for us?" Monsieur Gérard was not unwilling to use his magnificent gift. Léon, who felt that the end had come, politely echoed the request; and then Madame made her fatal mistake. The game was hers—she had only to stand aside and let it finish itself; but she could not stand aside—nervously, with happy flutterings, she must show them how she followed her husband's work, and how she helped him; and she didn't help him at all.

She drew out his music—it wasn't what he wanted to sing and he said so crisply; he always knew what he wanted to sing. Then she said she must play his accompaniment, so that he could stand up and let his voice out.

Now Monsieur Gérard's voice was not of a quantity to be lightly let out in a small bird-cage of a room; it would have been sufficient to roll over Capri like a rock-stream. Also, Monsieur Gérard was like a tiger to any accompanist but his own, who was taking at the moment a much-needed holiday.

It counted for nothing at all with Monsieur Gérard that his wife was dressed in white and scarlet and gold and that she had roused in him the temporary sentiments of attraction. From the moment that she mounted the music-stool nothing counted but her power of playing a correct accompaniment without too much expression. She had evoked the artist, and the artist upsets everything.

Monsieur Gérard began to sing; he modulated his great dramatic voice, but the sound of it shook the Villa degli Angeli; it poured out on the dancing air with the majestic roll of great billows breaking on a beach.

Madame tinkled mildly and prettily on the piano after him—too prettily, of course, and not very accurately. The little ineffective notes were like a peewhit chirping in a storm. In an instant Monsieur Gérard had swept her from the music-stool almost on to the floor. "You have no more music in

you than a fly!" he broke off abruptly to inform her, then he sat down in her place and roared in veluet with magnificent effect.

Madame, shaken and reduced from triumph to the verge of tears, quivered for a little in the window-seat; but even then her prize was still within her grasp—Monsieur had simply for the moment forgotten her. She was capable, if she had waited, of reminding him successfully. Alas! she had that fatal longing to help which reduces the greatest women to the level of a nuisance. She could not let herself be forgotten even for a moment—even for his art. She would go back and turn over the leaves for Raoul. He frowned, he swore under his breath, he shook his heavy head at her; but she went on turning over the leaves—he was not playing to the score, he did not want his leaves turned over—her eager, fluttering figure drove him frantic. In ten minutes he banged the piano lid down, and threw the score on the carpet. He told her before Léon, before Rose, in the drawing-room of the Villa degli Angeli, that she was an intrusive insect!

There was a horrible pause. Léon approached Madame in a state of mingled chivalry and satisfaction. She was a pitiable figure as she stood there biting at her dainty lace handkerchief to keep the tears back; her face was very white under its layer of powder. Probably it would have been better if she had sat down. She simply stood with imploring, helpless eyes fixed upon the angry tyrant before her.

No angry man likes to be looked at helplessly. Monsieur Gérard glared at her—then he made the gulf that had come between them impassable.

"Understand!" he shouted, turning the music still on the piano to and fro, as if he were making hay, "To-night I go to Naples! I cannot stand more of this! I will go to Naples for one night, for two—for three! You must remain here! I go to Naples!" Madame's eyes went from her husband to Léon. Léon's eyes were fixed on hers in pity, in forgiveness—and were they

also fixed a little in expectation? He knew, and Madame knew, precisely the purpose of Monsieur Gérard in going to Naples.

Rose did not understand as much as this, but she thought it was very wicked of Monsieur Gérard to go away from his wife on their honeymoon because she tried to turn over the leaves of his music.

She got up and crossed the room towards Madame. It was Rose who put an end to the unendurable silence.

Léon was waiting for a cue from Madame, and Madame was too stunned to give him any cue. She was like a little helpless leaf that has brought on its own storm, but Rose waited for nothing. She looked first at Monsieur Gérard. She compelled that enraged artist to meet her steady, disapproving eyes; then she held out her hand to Madame Gérard and with a gracious diffidence that was the perfection of dignity, she said in her stumbling French, "I hope very much, Madame, that if your husband is to leave you for a few days, you will give us as much of your company as possible."

Madame excused herself. She murmured under her breath that Rose was too kind. Once more her eyes flickered from her husband's back to Léon. "It is a great happiness to me to second my wife's invitation," said Léon gravely. He murmured something more as he bowed over her hand and kissed it. Rose had already turned and without even glancing in the direction of Monsieur Gérard she went out into the gay little garden.

Capri saw them return to the Hotel Paradiso.

Léon was remorsefully attentive to his wife; he treated her as if she were something very valuable that might break.

Perhaps in some subconscious way he knew that he was going to break her, but he was very much impressed by her behaviour.

She was, he thought to himself, the soul of generosity, and when we are sure that we have the soul of generosity

to deal with we sometimes find it difficult not to take advantage of it.

CHAPTER XI

THE next day Monsieur Gérard carried out his intention of going to Naples.

Madame Gérard remained invisible. She accepted the flowers Léon called upon her to deliver, but she sent down a message that she was indisposed and could see nobody. She was indisposed until five o'clock the following day. By this time she had made up her mind.

It was not an easy task. She said to herself again and again that she would have accepted heartbreak—but she could not accept outrage. Her husband had not only cruelly wronged her—he had done so publicly before the eyes of a man who loved her—and before his wife. Her marriage was a false step—it had been her first adventure—but in her imagination she had only counted upon adventures as successes—now she was face to face with an adventure which had proved a failure. She could not go back—she could only go on—and yet she hesitated, for after marriage adventures that go on are no longer innocent. Her husband had left her with a weapon lying within her reach—from the first it had occurred to her that she could strike back with Léon, but with this idea had come another one, that in striking back she must cruelly wound an innocent and happy woman. In all the horrible scene which had taken place the day before there had only been one moment less intolerable than the others, and Rose had given her that moment. She had distinctively stood by her with an offer of friendship.

Madame Gérard spent twenty-four bitter, sleepless hours considering Rose. At the end of that time—having come to the decision that she did not want to hurt her, but that she wished to do the thing that would hurt her—she made the further decision that, after all, it need not hurt Rose so very much. When she thought of her own unhap-

pininess, a little distress on the part of other wives did not seem out of place.

She would do her best to shield Rose from the truth, but she wouldn't do anything to prevent the truth taking place. These two decisions placed her in a better position than Léon. Léon had decided nothing.

He only knew that he must see this complex woman, that he must, out of chivalry, discover what she felt about the incredible behaviour of her husband. He must find out also—in honour or common kindness—if there wasn't in the situation some successful part for a good friend to play. He drew upon all his virtues for his reasons. Yesterday Madame had sharply wounded his *amour propre*; he saw that she had been playing a game with him. Well, the game had failed, and yet he was still there, there was therefore still the possibility of a new game under new conditions, with the advantage, perhaps, to him.

He went no further than that. He wanted, he assured himself, to go no further. He was full of consideration for Rose, but he distinctly wished to see how far he could go.

At five o'clock he found himself admitted. Madame was already out in the sheltered wistaria-covered balcony. She lay in a long chair draped in a soft white robe; there were pearls round her neck and a little black velvet band. She looked extraordinarily pathetic and young and very tired of grief.

There were no traces of tears on her little white face—but she was not the woman to allow traces of any kind to appear, unless they were becoming.

"It was kind of you to come," she said gently after a long pause. "Forgive me, I had misjudged you. I thought that you were playing with me."

Léon protested eagerly, how could she have had such an idea? One did not go about playing with young and innocent women who were unhappy. She must not do him so much injustice.

He talked for five minutes nobly and eloquently about unhappy young mar-

ried women. Madame Gérard listened, looking between the wistaria branches towards the sea. When he had quite finished she said gently, "And yet it was a plot between you and my husband—your friendship, your attention to me—they were not very real, Monsieur. You had agreed with him to win me over to his wishes. Is that not so?"

Léon was upset. You can never be sure what a husband will not tell a wife, even an estranged and angry husband. There is a terrible habit of indiscriminate confidence in marriage. Léon had come across it before.

He would have eagerly denied conjecture, but it would not do to deny a confidence; besides he was secretly much relieved at this new version of things. He had been afraid that Madame had been playing with him; it appeared now that he had been playing with her. What had happened yesterday was merely a charming little feminine *revanche*. He began to find the part he was playing more attractive.

"It is true," he said at last, "your husband told me that your marriage was not happy—and to begin with perhaps I had the idea that it lay with you to make it so. Forgive me, this idea soon passed. It passed before the affair of the other day showed me the incredible *lâcheté* of Raoul. Permit me to say that his behaviour shocked me to the heart; but before this shock took place I had learned in what light to consider you. Believe me, I have not been playing with you. I am in earnest, in terrible earnest."

She turned her eyes to his. They were not beautiful eyes like Rose's—but he did not know them so well, besides she used them better. "You are really in earnest, really, Léon?" she asked him searchingly. He sprang to his feet, but with a wave of her hand she motioned to him to remain where he was.

"I wonder," she said very softly. "I do not want to be twice deceived, to be deceived once is to go broken-winged

through life, but to be deceived twice, could one live at all?"

"I swear that I have not deceived you—that I will never deceive you!" cried Léon passionately. "The feeling that I have for you is real—it is intense."

Still he meant to stay at Capri; he hadn't any idea of doing anything else.

"You are prepared," she asked him, "to prove your words to me? You realize if I believe them what is at stake for me—and if you realize that do you not think that I have the right to ask you for a proof?"

"You shall not ask me for one!" he cried. "Rather I will give you *all* the proofs in my power—one or a dozen—what you will—you have only to ask!"

"You are very generous," she said with her pretty irony. "One will be enough. I want you to-night to take me to Naples. I cannot stay in Capri until my husband returns. I will not return alone to France. It appears that we made a mistake in not going to Naples for our honeymoon. Let us then—you and I—rectify this mistake."

Léon said nothing. He gripped at the little wooden balcony railing with both hands, and stared with blank eyes at the laughing sea. Leave Capri! Leave Rose! His heart shuddered within him—with every honest fibre of his nature, and he had many honest fibres in his nature, he loved Rose. He did not love the woman before him—but he had sought what she offered—how could he refuse it? It was true he had expected to make his own terms, but this would not be very easy to explain to her. Still, he tried hard to keep the situation in hand.

"I have said," he began at last, "that I considered your husband, in leaving you, to have committed the worst of infamies. You are asking me to commit the same."

Madame raised her eyebrows.

"You mean in leaving your wife?" she asked. "After what you have allowed me to suppose, I had not thought you would have that feeling. Nor would it be necessary for you to act as

my husband has acted. But I am supposing, of course, that what you feel for me is—real."

"Pardon me, Madame," said Léon firmly, "all that I have said to you is true—and yet—is it incredible to you?—I love my wife!"

Madame smiled at him.

"You know how children play with daisies?" she said. "As they pull off the little white petals one by one—'He loves me—a little, very much, passionately, not at all.' It is funny what comes after passionately—so soon after, Léon."

He stirred uneasily. Madame began to pull to pieces a spray of wistaria, throwing the blossoms one by one smilingly into her lap. "I do not ask you, my friend," she said slowly, "for the devotion of a lifetime—there are hardly enough to go round of these blossoms—we must not stop at passionately, must we—we must stop at not at all! I was thinking of spending three days in Naples."

"And you would expect me to love you in three days?" asked Léon reproachfully. He watched her feverishly. A man must know what he is in for. "In three days," said Madame, throwing all the silvery mauve blossoms with a quick little gesture over the balcony, "I should insist upon your loving me." As she did this her small, firm hand touched his. He caught it to his lips and kissed it passionately. The smile in her eyes deepened.

She supposed he must have stopped thinking of Rose, but he said again, after a moment's pause, "To leave her—to leave her—that seems somehow very base!"

"Then do not leave her," said Madame wearily, withdrawing her hand. "Break your word to me, it is very simple. I have no claim on you—I am not your wife."

"You are everything in the world to me," he said desperately. For the moment he believed she was.

She leaned forward a little.

"After all," she said, "your wife will

not know why you go to Naples. You have only to say you go on business. She is so innocent she will believe you—you might even tell her that you are to act as my escort back to my husband. She need not suffer."

Léon flung back his head. "But," he stammered, his eyes filling with sudden tears, "I cannot lie to Rose! She is not like that! I cannot lie to her—it is as you say, she would believe me!"

"Ah," said Madame, "let us hope then that you can lie about women better than you can lie to them! But you are making a mistake. It is very easy to lie to us. All men have found it so."

He pushed her words away from him.

"Elise," he asked her suddenly, "do you care for me? This thing that you are about to do, is it from your heart?"

She rose and stood beside him.

"I will give you the proof," she said in a low voice.

But still he was not satisfied; his eyes continued to question her.

"It is from my heart," she repeated firmly. He caught her to him and kissed her, but it seemed to him even then as if he held something dead in his arms, something which by no beat of the heart, by no single spiritual response, met his. She gave him her lips.

For a long moment he held her, then she withdrew herself and moved away from him. "No more," she said gently. "To-night I shall expect you. I will meet you at the turn of the road by the Madonna of the Rocks."

She moved with him slowly towards the door. "*Voyons!*" she said before they parted. "Don't hurt her—don't ever tell her—your young wife. She is too good. A lie will cost you nothing. And, after all, if it was not me—it would be some other woman soon—would it not? After all—" Her voice faltered. Something in her wavered for a moment, something very hard and deep, tried suddenly to melt. "After all," said Léon gravely, "this is the greatest proof I have to give. Take it as generously as I give it!"

She looked at him with strange eyes. "We are both about to be very generous, are we not?" she said with a dry little smile. "*Eh bien!* Love is short and marriage is long—all the better for love—which sees its end."

Léon did not like this point of view. There was some truth in it, no doubt, but it would have sounded better from the lips of a man. He kissed her hands reproachfully. He could not think for the moment of anything very beautiful to say about love, and Madame herself said no more. She simply looked suggestively at the door.

After he had gone she stood where he had left her, clenching and unclenching her small, firm hands.

"From my heart," she whispered, "*Mon Dieu*—it appears so—from my heart."

CHAPTER XII

ROSE was finishing a letter to Agatha on the balcony. She found it difficult to write to her sisters, they seemed so very far away.

She was afraid, too, that they might find her letters dull. You couldn't go on describing the blue grotto; besides, neither Agatha nor Edith cared for descriptions of scenery, they always skipped them in books; and as far as Rose could tell nobody played any particular game in Capri. Young men shot birds on Sunday afternoons when they could, but they weren't even the proper birds to shoot, so perhaps it was better not to mention them.

When Rose wrote to her people she always said "we" even when she was referring to things that she did by herself.

It wasn't very like a Pinsent to give way to this illicit expansion of fact, but Rose comforted herself by thinking that after all editors said "we" when there was only one of them writing, and most of the married people she knew expressed themselves in the plural, though that perhaps was because they really did the things together. Still, she went on writing "we" because she

didn't want her people to think anything funny about Léon. She had just got as far as "We have such jolly little dinners in the garden," when she heard Léon's whistle coming up the stairs. He stood looking at her a little curiously.

"You are writing," he asked her, "to your people?"

"To Agatha," she said. "Have you any message?"

Léon sometimes sent very amusing messages to Agatha. For a moment Léon did not reply, then he said, "And what do you say to them—of me—your people?"

Rose blushed, just the same wonderful pink tulip blush Léon had from the first particularly admired, but it was ill-timed, it looked guilty. It shot through his uneasy mind that she had been complaining of him to the Pinsents. In his irritable, resentful state it gave him a sudden sense of justification. Hadn't he done already wonders for Rose? He had not made open love to Elise (until just now, of course), he had borne for over a month the ennui of Capri. He hadn't so much as been to a café without his wife, and now he had almost decided not to leave her!

"Tell them," he said bitterly, "that you are perfect, and that I am a monster of depravity. Almost all wives say that to their relatives sooner or later. You, it appears, have taken up the tone in good time!"

"Léon!" she cried, aghast. And then, because she loved him so, because she had shielded him in the defiance of truth, because she had never had a suspicion of his faithlessness, she chose this moment to say the only harsh thing she had ever said to him. "I think," she said, turning away her eyes, "that you are guilty of very bad taste."

It was, of course, the one fatal reproach to make to a Frenchman. If she had said he was guilty of anything else he would have forgiven her.

Léon rushed into their room, his cheeks on fire as if she had struck him. It was clear she no longer loved him! Coldly, cruelly, with her horrible Eng-

lish justice, so out of place in a woman, she had thrown this stone at his heart! There could be but one issue now. He must go to Naples. She complained of him to her parents and she had accused him of bad taste! He packed a small bag feverishly. The door between them was shut.

Rose hesitated. Should she open it and tell him she was sorry?

What would Agatha or Edith do, if they were there? Probably they would have burst open the door with shouts of glee, and inserted a cake of soap down Léon's back, but this happy method of conciliation seemed closed to Rose. She had never had their robust gift of horseplay. She got up hesitatingly and walked slowly away, out into the garden and beyond the gates to post her letter. Perhaps when she came back for dinner she might have thought of something nice to say, something that would show Léon she was sorry and not aggravate him.

It was a lovely evening. She wandered on, seeing at every fresh turn of the road a yet more glorious view.

The great bay spread before her like an endless liquid flame. The colour seemed to throb upon its burnished shield.

Naples lay beyond it, a long pearly circle in the evening light, pale cream and coral pink and soft, dull gold. Above Vesuvius the white plume of smoke drove straight as a lifted feather up into the sky.

She went on till she reached the Madonna of the Rocks, then she sat under the tall raised figure with its lamp.

At the turn of the road below her a little carriage was standing; in it was the figure of a woman in white. The figure reminded her of Madame Gérard, only it could not be Madame Gérard, of course, because Madame had written to Rose that she was not well and could not leave her room.

As Rose sat there her eyes filled with tears. They were not for herself, though her own heart was sore; they were for the poor woman whose husband had so cruelly left her all alone

on her honeymoon. And when Rose thought how happy she was herself, and how soon she would tell Léon, with her cheek against his cheek, that she was sorry she had been horrid, her heart ached for that other bride who had no lover to appease; and must be looking at all this great sparkling sea and wonderful bright earth with such sad, different eyes! And so Rose sat there and cried for Madame Gérard—and Madame Gérard, two hundred yards away, waited for Rose's husband.

He came at last, hurriedly, quietly, with hanging head, like a thief. He was ashamed, ashamed of his anger against Rose, of his incredible folly, of his silly, intemperate desires. He passed close by the rock on which Rose sat. Her heart moved suddenly against her side; it betrayed her; stubbornly it beat as if it knew itself in danger, and yet, Rose said to herself, there was no danger. It was only Léon hurrying by, looking as if he were ashamed.

She saw him get into the little carriage, and then turn and look back. She could not see his face, but it seemed to her as if he were reluctant to be driven away. Of course he would be back for dinner.

Perhaps, after all, that *was* Madame Gérard, and Léon was driving her down to the eight o'clock boat? Probably she was going to Naples to join her husband, and Léon had offered to see her off. He would be very late for dinner. If she hadn't been cross he would have told her what he meant to do. The little Capri ponies plunged forward and the carriage disappeared in a cloud of dust. A long while after she saw the little steamer pushing its way across the crystal sea and leaving behind it a long purple trail. She watched it till it lost itself beyond Castellamare. Léon would soon be back now. She walked slowly towards the hotel and when she got there she was conscious of something strange about it. The Padrone met her with a bunch of flowers, and the stout Padrona bustled out from the office to ask Rose if there

wasn't anything extra she would like—would she not dine now in the garden?

"Oh, no, not now," Rose said quickly. "I will wait for my husband." A shadow passed over the Padrona's face. She hesitated and then said with urgent kindness, "The Signora has only to ask for anything she wants." The waiter, too, looked at Rose with strange, sympathetic eyes. He suggested her feeding the pigeons and hurried to offer her new bread off the table of some travelling Germans.

"These people," he said, "Tedeschi will not know the difference. Take it, Signora mia, for your birds."

The pigeons had already gone to roost.

Peppina, the chambermaid, watched Rose from the balcony. She should have been at her supper, but she stood for some time gazing down into the garden at the figure of the young wife. Suddenly she also bethought herself of something and hurried down into the garden carrying a black kitten in her apron which she deposited on Rose's lap. "Behold," she said, "the little one of fortune. A black cat brings luck. Talk to it, Signora, perhaps it will stay with you." But the black kitten jumped off Rose's lap. It wanted to play with its own shadow in the jungle grass, and to stalk birds. It was not too young for that.

The sky changed slowly from rose colour to a clear, pale blue. One by one the stars came out, but they made no place in the sky, till the evening waned and night came, velvety and black, to Capri, embracing it like a dropped mantle, and then, through the curtain of the mysterious dark, the stars grew enormous and shone down upon the scented lemon gardens and over the vague wide sea.

Outside the gate a mandolin struck up a hungry, empty little tune.

Rose shivered and moved back into the house. She could not bear the beauty of the garden any more alone.

The Padrona met her with a letter in her hand. She had had it for two

hours, but she could not make up her mind to give it to Rose. "How," she asked her husband, "am I to slay happiness?—I am not a butcher."

"Signora," she said nervously, "here is a little letter—it is doubtless from the Signore. He is perhaps detained—hospitable friends have kept him—" Rose held out her hand for the letter. The Pinsents never made fusses. They didn't believe in bad things happening, and when they happened they tried to look as if they weren't bad.

This was the way Rose looked now. She smiled pleasantly at the Padrona, and moved slowly away towards her room with the letter. She would not hurry.

The Padrona gazed compassionately after her. "She is walking over a precipice," said the Padrona to herself, "as if it were a path in our garden, Poverina!"

It was a very short letter.

"My dear," Léon wrote in French, "I find I must go to Naples. It will not be for long I leave you, and I have told them all to look after you until my return. Forgive me. Léon."

After all he could not lie to Rose.

She read his letter three times. The first two times she translated his letter into English, and wondered why Léon had gone to Naples. The third time she read it without translating it, and then she knew everything. She knew everything in all the world.

But she could not quite believe it. The arrogance in her rose up and fought against the truth.

Rose had very little arrogance, but all women who have been loved must have some. Surely he who was so much her lover could not have left her so soon?

She remembered that when she had said to her mother, "But I could never leave Léon," Mrs. Pinsent had made no direct response. Her mother had realized that that wasn't the only question. How had she realized this? Had her father ever?—Rose buried her face in her hands and wept bitterly. "Oh, poor mother!" she murmured, "poor

mother!" She could not see herself as wholly poor yet.

And then she remembered Léon's face as he passed her, his sad, ashamed face, and she knew now why he had left her; but that he did not want to leave her.

She sat up very straight and stopped crying when she realized this.

She thought it very strange, for she knew quite well that Madame Gérard didn't love Léon, either. She loved her own husband, Rose had seen this; she knew it as if it were in the multiplication table; but she couldn't think of Madame Gérard now, she wasn't her business. Léon was her business. She must understand why he had done this thing. It wasn't any use being silly and just crying, then it might happen again, and it should never happen again; she wasn't going to have Léon looking ashamed twice.

From the first what wrung her heart was that Léon would feel it so! He had meant to be such a help, he nearly had been, and if he hadn't been wasn't it because Rose had failed him? She hadn't meant to fail him of course, she had meant just the opposite; but that was before she knew all about everything, and before you know how to mean, meaning isn't going to be much of a help.

She had thought Léon was strong. He wasn't strong, but in the rush of her passionate reasoning she carried this feather-weight of disadvantage into the fathomless sea of her love and left it safely there. No, he wasn't strong—but he was Léon—he was hers.

It was she who should have realized his weakness. She remembered now that once or twice lately he had turned back from his excursions with Madame to suggest that Rose should join them, but she had refused in her foolish pride because she had wanted to prove to him how magnanimous she was. She shouldn't have done that at all, she shouldn't have had any pride—and it didn't matter in the least whether she was magnanimous or not! She should have held him to her by whatever could

have kept him there. Tears, if tears were necessary; pity, duty, pleading—anything and everything that would have helped him.

She had been thinking of what he would think of her—not of what he needed in her! She saw now it only mattered what he thought of her in so far as it helped her to save him. Her magnanimity hadn't saved him. Something less beautiful but more practical might have saved him, her just being, for instance, a little more there.

But he hadn't lied to her, she came back to that as if it was something on which her heart might rest. Ah! if he had done that she would have known that he no longer loved her!

But he had given her no reason—no excuse; he had flung his sin before her because he was ashamed, because he wanted his soul to be naked in her sight—because he knew that she would never fail him.

In the dark she caught sight of the hovering Peppina. "Signora," Peppina pleaded, "will you not dine?"

Rose stood up. "Yes," she said in a voice that sounded strange. "Yes, please, I will dine."

The Pinsents always dined.

"Tell the Padrona," Rose said steadily, "that the Signora has had to go to Naples on business. He will not return to-night."

Peppina still hovered. "Si Signora," she said, "and the black cat, the one I brought to the Signora earlier in the evening, he has found for himself the room of the Signora. Behold, he lies there curled up on the bed. He is there now—a miracle! The Signora remembers that I told her 'a black cat means good fortune.'"

Rose hurried into the room, and found him. He was not quite so good as her fox terrier at home, but he was a comfort. She buried her cheek against the round black ball of the fortunate kitten, and wept with easier tears.

Then she went down and had her dinner in the garden.

CHAPTER XIII

THEY sat on a terrace overlooking the most beautiful view in the world. They did not look at it, nor did they look at each other. They were beautifully dressed, they lived in the same world and spoke the same tongue; they would have laughed at, if they would not have made, the same jokes. The materials for happiness were heaped before them; but neither of them stretched out a hand to take them. They were both like creatures under an invisible ban.

It could not be said that Léon had any cause for a grievance. Madame Gérard had given him what she had offered him, but he had fatally underestimated how terribly this gift would fall short of what he wanted.

From the moment of their departure from Capri it had come over him that Elise was not beautiful, that she had no particular charm of person nor of mind; she neither touched nor soothed him. There was a fatal alteration in her. She was accessible.

Léon could not tell what had caused this change in his feelings—he had been covered so lightly by a rare and perfect tenderness that he had not realized how it warmed and nourished him, until he found himself sharply deprived of it.

He felt like someone suddenly pushed into the dark. He fumbled and knocked himself against obstacles, possessed by an intolerable fear, a fear that he shouldn't get out, shouldn't ever get back into his light again. He knew now what the light was, he had been in relation to perfect purity, and it was not until the relation ceased that he realized it had not left him as it found him.

He no longer wanted anything less. He wanted only his flawless jewel, the deep and incorruptible heart of Rose. And as for the first time he knew the hunger of a real desire, he knew also that he shrank from returning to her after so light and base a sin.

He had thought this three days could

be nothing, an episode, a chance way-side plucking of a flower, something that he could quite easily put away from him and forget on his return to Rose.

He now discovered that it would burn into his heart like a corrosive fluid, and make him fear to seek her presence. It was not that he doubted Rose would forgive him; but he came up against something in himself which would not yield forgiveness. He had too easily gone wrong.

He kept his eyes carefully away from Madame Gérard. He hated her with a cold antagonism; he could not make love to her. He fell back on a sharpened irony of attention. She should have all that she wanted and he waited upon her with an exaggerated courtesy; but she was as oblivious of his coldness as she had been of his warmth.

Léon had never known so strange a woman.

As for Madame Gérard, she had effected her purpose. Last night at the Opera, seated in the front of a box with Léon beside her, she had caught and held the eyes of her enraged husband. That was what she had come to Naples for.

Léon had not seen him. Monsieur Gérard sufficiently accompanied to feel that a scene would have been out of place, had swiftly withdrawn.

But before he had withdrawn, his eyes had crossed swords with his wife's.

After that there seemed very little to do. She was conscious that the rest of her life lay before her, and that her husband would never forgive her. The prospect once accepted, ceased to stimulate.

From time to time she was conscious of Léon, but never as a consideration requiring much effort. She had fulfilled her bargain and nothing more seemed to be asked of her. She felt with relief that rather less was required of her than might have been expected, and she was vaguely grateful to Léon for leaving her so much alone.

He was a man of tact and could be

trusted to look out her trains for her and see her eventually back to France. She supposed she would have sooner or later to rejoin her parents; but she wished she could forget what she had done to Rose.

Now that her purpose was accomplished this fact became more and more troublesome to her. Léon she had no qualms about, for she realized neither his unhappiness nor what she had cost him, but she did realize Rose.

It made her a little sharp with Léon when she thought of him at all; but it was quite easy not to think of him.

Madame Gérard wanted to ask him if he had succeeded in keeping Rose unaware, but she shrank from speaking of Rose. Neither of them spoke of her, and neither of them thought of anything else. It made the silence heavy between them.

"You would like something to eat or drink, perhaps?" Léon at length roused himself to ask her. "No," she said, "thank you."

He lit a cigarette and smoked it through, then he said, "It is, I believe, considered very beautiful to drive to Posilippo in the sunset—to dine out there and return. Shall I order a carriage?"

She turned her head for a brief moment and glanced at him. She wished he would go away now—drive to Posilippo by himself, for instance. "Do as you like," she said without stirring, "I stay here—." "Then, of course," he said gravely, "I shall not leave you." It was like being in prison—and not being quite sure whether you were the prisoner or the gaoler.

It was a relief to know that someone else was advancing along the terrace. Léon sprang to his feet; he was not a clumsy man, but he very nearly upset the table by which they sat.

Rose was walking slowly towards them. She held a Baedeker in one hand and a parasol in the other. She was very tall, and she looked taller than usual. Her wide blue eyes rested on the wonderful sea beyond—but she had seen Léon and Madame Gérard.

She walked towards them without speaking or smiling.

When she came up to them she smiled a little nervously, but in a very friendly way, as if she was glad to see them both, but didn't want, of course, to make a fuss about it.

"They told me," she said, "that I should find you out here."

Madame Gérard could not rise. Her lips moved as if she tried to speak, but she dared not speak. This was her judgment. She was the cleverest of women, but she no longer knew what to say.

Léon stood there with his eyes on the ground, white as a sheet and trembling. He could not look at Rose at all. He felt as if her eyes were fire from Heaven.

Rose spoke again. "Léon," she said, "do you think I might have some tea?"

"*Mon Dieu*—Rose—" he whispered under his breath. "*Mon Dieu*—what must you think—"

"If I could have some roll and butter, too," she went on, ignoring his manner, "it would be very nice. I am rather hungry." Léon turned and without speaking passed quickly into the house. Rose sat down opposite Madame and put the Baedeker on the table. Madame Gérard lifted her heavy eyelids and looked at Rose.

She did not know what was coming, but she meant whatever came—scorn, anger or contempt—to take it.

She was not sure what Rose wanted—she waited to be sure.

Rose met her eyes with a grave and infinitely kindly look. "I am so sorry," she said slowly in her hesitating French. "We meant to help you, but I'm afraid we didn't."

Madame drew a quick breath, she had not expected this. It had not occurred to her that Rose would be sorry; that hard, stubborn substance that was in her breast melted once and for all towards Rose. The tears filled her eyes and fell slowly into her lap.

"My dear," she said, "no one could help me, and I have not even—helped myself."

"I was stupid," Rose went on gently, "and I didn't understand; but I do understand now. What I wanted to say before Léon comes back was, that I *know* he meant not to make things worse. You *will* forgive him, won't you, because it was my fault really. If I *had* understood, you see, I should have known he couldn't help you—not in that way—and I think I could have stopped him."

Madame Gérard nodded. "I have nothing to forgive your husband," she said, choosing her words carefully. "He has done me no great wrong; always I knew where his heart was—it is still there, Madame—it is in your hands. I—" said Madame Gérard, looking away from Rose's pitying, tender eyes—"have what I deserve. I have nothing."

The waiter came with the tea. Léon returned at the same time. He could not keep away, and yet it seemed to him as if there had never been less of him anywhere—his self-respect, his manhood had left him.

Rose turned to him, and with a little gesture of perfect tenderness and trust she slipped her hand over his. It was as if she gave him back his soul. He drew himself up—strength passed into him. She had come back, she was his—somehow or other she was there to save him, and at last he could be generous—he could let himself be saved. He no longer cared that he must be a poor figure in her sight, and he forgot that there was any other sight but hers.

She withdrew her hand again and went on very slowly, still in French, including him in the conversation with a little wave of the hand.

"I have just," she said to Madame Gérard, "been talking to Monsieur Gérard. He thinks I have improved very much in my French."

"My husband!" Madame cried, starting forward, then she sank back, white-lipped and trembling.

"Yes," said Rose, "I went to see him. I found him in the Baedeker. He was in the sixth hotel I called at."

"But why," began Madame Gérard,

"why did you seek him—Madame, what did you say to him? Forgive me, I do not understand?"

"I thought perhaps I had better see him first," Rose explained. "I saw him in the hall. I think he was in a kind of rage—he said he had seen you last night at a theatre with Léon, and I said, yes—that I never went to theatres in Italy because I didn't understand the language, and then he asked me if I had been with you all the time."

Madame Gérard held her breath. Her eyes seemed like a prayer.

Rose turned to Léon. "I'm afraid I didn't tell him the truth," she said hesitatingly. "I hope it wasn't very dreadful—I said, yes, of course I had."

"You lied to him!" gasped Léon. "Then—then—" for the first time he looked at Madame Gérard. She covered her face with her hands. Rose looked a little perturbed. "I didn't know," she said, "what else there was to be done. Of course I know it was very wrong. I never have been untruthful before. I—I don't like telling lies, but I thought—I'd better. So I said we were all together. I was a little afraid he mightn't believe me or that he might ask me where we were, but he didn't. He quite believed me. He only asked me what I wanted to see him for."

"*Par exemple,*" muttered Léon; "he asked you that?"

Rose poured herself out a second cup of tea. "I said," she went on, "I came because I thought you might be sorry for leaving your wife all alone—just because she tried to turn over your music for you—and that I thought perhaps you might be wanting to tell her so—and not know where she was."

Madame's hands fell from her face. "But yes—" she whispered, "and what did he say, Raoul, when you asked him that?"

There was a new look in her eyes

now, and a little colour in her pale cheeks.

"He said, he *was* sorry," said Rose, gently. "He said he never would have behaved like that, and never meant to—it was only the music, he said, he often lost his head over music, and that that afternoon he had felt how great a success his marriage was—so that it was doubly unfortunate. He said he wanted to come back to you very much."

There was a moment's pause. Madame Gérard's voice was quite different when she spoke now, there was hope in it. "And what answer did you give him, Madame?" she said. "I think I can see by your eyes that you gave him an answer."

Rose added. "I told him—I had a feeling that you would forgive him—and that I would ask you, if you did, to send him a line to-night—saying if you would see him, and where, of course! You see I didn't know where you were at the time—but I found you quite easily, because I had remembered something that Léon had said to me about this special view."

Léon buried his head in his hands and laughed wildly. He laughed to save himself from tears. Madame Gérard said nothing at all; but she stretched out her hand for the tea Rose had poured out for her and began to drink it.

Rose ate two rolls and a half. "I'm afraid you'll think I'm dreadfully greedy," she explained, "but I haven't had any lunch, or any breakfast either, properly."

"But I," said Léon, coming from behind his hands, "I cannot meet Monsieur Gérard to-morrow."

"No," said Rose, "but I left my luggage on the Quay. There is a boat to-morrow that goes to Venice, and I thought," she murmured with a diffident, disarming smile, "that perhaps you wouldn't mind if we just went to Venice, Léon. It would be more gay."

THE END.



THE OLD CONSCIENCE

By Henry Altimus

I MET Gandy in the usual way. He came to my studio one day and told me that he had heard much about my work, that I was a coming portrait painter and that he would like me to do him.

Gandy was a man of about sixty, with a mass of long white hair and a kindly face that belied the challenge in his eyes. In his day he had been one of our great pianists and he now taught fashionables who paid him ten dollars an hour for the privilege of mentioning his name in a familiar, proprietary manner when music was discussed. He was a good subject and sat for me four or five times. Our relations were quite impersonal and business-like and I don't think he held the portrait in high esteem when it was finished. He didn't know much about art and was at a loss how to judge a painting. He came in one day, studied the portrait, and said: "Painting is slow work. When will it be finished?"

"It is finished," I said, and I thought he'd never forgive me. But when the portrait was awarded the gold medal at the Exposition he warmed to me marvelously. He insisted on my coming to dinner that very evening, and I did.

I arrived promptly at seven and was received by an amazingly good-looking young woman of about twenty-six or seven. I assumed she must be Gandy's daughter. She was in evening dress and appeared to be fresh from her bath, little ringlets of wet hair still clinging to her neck and cheeks. Her mahogany-colored hair was done up in an impatient coiffure which was in charming

contrast with her fine features. At first sight of her tall, strong-limbed, restful figure my mind leaped back to Pheidias. She informed me that Gandy was delayed and offered to entertain me until he arrived.

"I believe you will be invited this evening to make a portrait of me," she said, as we sat down in the music room.

"I shall be more than delighted, Miss—Gandy, I presume?" I said tentatively.

"No," she said, smiling, and assuming at once a familiar and playful attitude, as though she expected me to guess again. I recall vividly that swift shift from a polite front to a delightful, very girlish sensing of sport bordering on mischief. I caught the spirit of the scene.

"If you are married," I said, laughing, "you can't expect me to guess, can you?"

She studied me for several moments, her pretty mouth trembling on the verge of laughter, and then said, deliberately, "Why not Mrs. Gandy?"

"No!" I exclaimed, without reflecting, and then I felt myself flushing. I immediately tried to cover my blunder, and was thinking just what to say, but could find no effective exit. My confusion increased, but as time went by without a word from me I realized that it was now too late to offer any explanation.

All this time she was smiling up at me, gleefully, girlishly, as though her trap had worked. And yet there was a sympathetic note in her attitude which assured me that she was amused and not at all hurt, and we soon were laughing together over my blunder.

However, I grew silent presently and I am sure I must have saddened visibly. The mood of the first shock reasserted itself. I felt as though the curtain had gone up on a familiar tragedy. I was sorry for the girl and I was a little angry with Gandy. Mrs. Gandy must have observed the change in my demeanor. She continued her gay prattle and persevered in her playful manner, but suddenly she stopped and said:

"Oh, you mustn't heed me. I *am* such a kid!"

Gandy appeared and the three of us sat down to dinner. I was prepared to be sulky and resentful, but the dinner went off beautifully. I found Gandy at home a most likeable old fellow, bubbling over with heartiness, chock full of sly notions about life, and a great talker. Mrs. Gandy and I listened with interest and every now and then his wife would interrupt with: "Isn't he absolutely impossible?"

He didn't ask me to do his wife's portrait that evening, but he invited me for dinner again the following week, and after that I was a frequent visitor. On one occasion he remembered to ask me to do the portrait.

After a few visits to the house my entire attitude to the Gandy establishment changed. At first I had really resented Gandy's cruelty in binding a young and beautiful girl to an unnatural mode of living, but it was extraordinary how being with them disarmed one completely of one's prejudices. There was such a lightness and grace and freedom about their life that I was irresistibly won over once I got to know them well, and I found myself hoping that the thing might not end in disaster, as I had always thought such marriages must. I felt that the Gandys had been able to accomplish something that had never been well done, and I vaguely but loyally resolved to help.

I grew to be very fond of the old man, and I know he liked me immensely. I also had many marks of an implicit confidence. On several occasions, after dinner, Gandy would say: "I've some letters to write. You kids run

along. And don't stay out too late." There was something charmingly unreal about the whole arrangement. Gandy didn't behave at all like the senile husband of a lovely young girl. He encouraged absolute liberty and independence in her. There was no evidence of a passionate attachment between them, but it was clear that he was immeasurably fond and proud of his wife. He encouraged her whims, shared her inconstant enthusiasms for sketching, writing or music in a benevolent manner, and always appeared in the rôle of a fond exhibitor showing off the tricks of a pet he had trained himself.

II

At the studio, while I was working on her portrait and during the evenings when the old man drove us out of the house, Mrs. Gandy and I came to be very good friends. We were of exactly the same age, had numerous common interests, and got on capitally.

Life came easy to her. She had an abnormal, almost depressing, talent for eking joy out of the slightest incidents in life. She was really a handsome, unchecked, irresponsible young animal. And her attitude toward Gandy was amazing. At first it was disconcerting, even alarming, but I soon concluded that it was just an irrelevancy and a lack of imaginative discipline which was above any reproach.

It was part of her odd manner about Gandy to speak of him as though she were his widow, yet without any touch of disloyalty or mischief. She had a way of making whimsical plans in which Gandy was utterly ignored.

"I am going to Iceland one of these days," she would say, "and build myself a little hut and write rafts of stuff. Life in New York is boring me."

Or, "I wish I could earn my own living. Sometimes I think I should like to run away and start a sketching class somewhere and become independent and do absolutely as I please."

I set this down merely to high spirits and never took these outbursts serious-

ly. Certainly there was a gulf between these two—I could not pretend to be totally blind to that—but it was invisibly bridged by some community of temperament or mood or something outside of my understanding. After our first few meetings I felt as though it was indelicate to probe further, and in the end I became confident that nothing could ever go wrong here. However, one afternoon I received a very unexpected shock.

It was at Mrs. Gandy's last sitting for the portrait, and I had asked her to stay for a cup of tea. She found it extremely diverting watching me play the host at such a formal function as tea, and she refused to help me in the hope that I might make some amusing blunder.

However, everything went off smoothly and she insisted on removing the things herself. Then we made ourselves comfortable and sat down for a little chat. I had lighted my pipe and we both began to watch the lovely blue whirls of smoke, the elastic sheets of veil and the sudden, headlong vortices that make smoke so fascinating. Neither of us undertook to break a silence that had lasted almost five minutes and it continued. Mrs. Gandy's eyes were fixed on the smoke, not in a stare but as if she saw many visions in it. I had never seen her in such a suppressed, wistful mood.

The sun was down, the shadows in my studio were deepening and evening threw a veil over everything.

My thoughts fell upon a poem I was then writing and without any preamble I recited, in a low, monotonous tone in keeping with the atmosphere, a stanza I had added that morning:

"I'll come astride a thunderbolt

Blue

And spatter through the sunset's
golden bath,

Gathering wondrous garments in my
path,

With stars bedecked

And planet-specked,

And wrap my heart in them to give
To you."

"How lovely!" said Mrs. Gandy in a whisper, faithful to the tone I had adopted. "Whose?"

I indicated it was my own, and she bade me read more of my work. I did so, and the magic of mood was at work. They were mostly love poems and after I had read a few I leaped off at a tangent and spoke about love enthusiastically, with an ever-growing earnestness and abandon, borrowing words and images from all literature in a grand summary and apotheosis of love.

Then I paused. I suddenly realized that I had been talking a very long time and altogether too seriously. The room was quite dark now. I had not heard a sound from Mrs. Gandy.

"Oh, we must have some light!" I exclaimed at last, in a tone as if to say: "Stuff and nonsense! After all, love isn't the chief business of life!"

I was about to rise from my chair, when a hand caught mine in the dark and kept me in my seat. I did not know that she had come so close to me in the dark. I could just make out her face near mine.

"Isn't it all strange and wonderful?" she was saying. "What a beautiful thing love must be! You have made my heart thrill fearfully—for the first time. . . ."

"I have never loved anyone in my life."

III

By every rule of pretentious modern sympathies my heart should have gone out at once to the woman who had never known love and who was bound to an old man whom, as I now knew, she did not love at all. Yet when Mrs. Gandy, in that one sentence, revealed the astonishing situation to me, my only emotion was one of shock. I felt as though I were witness to an act or a gesture of treason. I felt as though Gandy were being betrayed.

Without a word I rose and struck a light. I discovered Mrs. Gandy covering her face with her hands.

There was a long silence.

"It's the light," she said after a while,

as though she found an explanation necessary. "It's quite blinding."

When she left she did not give me her hand. All that night I was haunted by a vision of Mrs. Gandy covering her face with her hands.

She dropped in at the studio on the following afternoon and I put my work aside and tried to entertain her. I spoke with a studied levity and broached many inconsequent subjects, but she checked me frequently. Her manner was grave. She was not at all the girl she was twenty-four hours before. Her careless animalism, her irrepressible girlishness were gone.

I realized that she expected we would begin where we had left off the previous day. It was a painful situation.

Do not imagine that I was unmoved, either by the situation itself or by Mrs. Gandy. Both stirred me deeply. I was really very fond of Mrs. Gandy. We had spent many very pleasant hours together and a delightful comradeship had sprung up between us. I was by no means insensible to her charms. But before everything else I was Gandy's friend, not only because he was so amiable, but, as I have said, because he was doing what had so frequently ended in disaster and seemed to be coming out successfully. I had long ago resolved to help this thing through with all my might. When I saw the whole fine structure threatening to topple down before my eyes, my strongest impulse was to put my shoulder to it and keep it standing. I hardly considered what it meant to the girl—in fact, I wasn't sure until later that it meant anything to her—but I thought what a terrible thing it would be for Gandy if things went wrong. Besides, I realized, even at that time, what a menacing capacity for mischief there was in Mrs. Gandy's avowal.

As delicately as I could that afternoon I made it clear to her what her duty was and where a married woman looking for love must needs seek it. In spite of my efforts she left me hurt.

I paced my studio for a long time after she left. I wasn't quite so sure

about the course I had dictated as I pretended to be. My mind was raided by many conflicting thoughts.

"Besides," I at length concluded, after an hour of floor-pacing and tramping upon an insistent thought, "only a cad could betray the magnificent confidence Gandy has shown in me!"

IV

TEN days went by before I visited the Gandys again. The old man called me up one morning and wouldn't hang up until I had promised to come for dinner.

It was a gloomy meal, so fearfully unlike the gay functions I had become accustomed to that I wondered what Gandy must think. Mrs. Gandy was silent throughout the meal. Gandy was plainly distressed.

His wife did not wait for her coffee. On the plea of a headache she retired.

"Did you notice?" Gandy asked, as soon as she left the room. "She's worrying me. Nerves and too much hustling. She must have a rest. I've a good mind to send her away."

"It's been that way for a week now. She's got to get away from New York."

I agreed with Gandy. We had never discussed his marriage or his home. It was evident that he thought everything perfect in the most perfect of unions, and I kept my own counsel.

The next time I dined with Gandy we were alone. He had sent his wife to Maine. Her first letter was brief and gloomy and he was keenly distressed, but he was sure she would get back her spirits. I saw that he hadn't the faintest suspicion that his home happiness was threatened.

As for myself, it was all clear to me now. I had been thinking.

I knew it was really my fault, in so far as human responsibility can ever be placed. Mrs. Gandy had been one of those intensely active, athletic, strong-limbed, earnest young women who develop late, who brush aside the real problems of life and tackle physical difficulties with the joy of a giant. The

type is a familiar one nowadays. Young animals, thoroughbreds we like to call them, yet singularly devoid of sex consciousness: they appear too strong and too proud to be weak. One day a divine accident makes them real and wonderful women.

Mrs. Gandy was one of these. It was Gandy's good fortune that he married such a woman. She asked little of life except that it give her enough to do. She made no demands that he could not answer.

It was my misfortune that I had to bring into her life the consciousness of a great thing overlooked, hitherto disregarded. One afternoon had been sufficient for that. One rhapsodic talk had made her a woman and her life was made tragic by a new want.

I was certain she did not love me. In the confusion into which a new emotion had thrown her she may have thought she did. I was equally confident that she would realize after a time that she did not really love me. But there was no solution in this thought. I knew that life for her, from now on, was a menace. Any day now there might come along A Man. . . .

I was alarmed at the thought that she was alone in Maine.

And when her letters to Gandy altered their tone and once more reflected a lively, happy, sportive mood I was keenly distressed. I now dined with Gandy frequently, and he always read her letters to me. He was elated, but I invariably left with a sense of something crumbling, of tragedy impending. And I solemnly resolved to avert it with all my strength.

V

I DISLIKED him from the first. His name was Kendrick and he was connected with some New York paper in an editorial capacity. He was tall, well made, handsome and confident.

He was present at the dinner Gandy gave when his wife returned from Maine, and I gathered he had made her acquaintance there. I recalled the

change of tone in those letters. I met him at the table frequently after that. Gandy seemed to like him and he trusted him as he trusted everyone.

It was no secret to me. At first I was perplexed what attitude to assume. Things were going on very handsomely in the Gandy home. Mrs. Gandy was herself again and her husband fell into his former attitude of pride in her, bragging and showing off shamelessly. I hadn't the desire or the courage to interfere. Frankly, I wasn't quite sure that it wasn't, after all, quite an innocent affair, in which no grave injury was done to anyone.

But one evening I witnessed a scene that stung me to decision. Gandy was celebrating his sixty-first birthday with a dinner at his home. Kendrick was there and so was a Miss Betty Bang, a clever journalist whose daily contributions in the *New York World* had made her a conspicuous social if not literary figure. She was a very attractive, alert young woman of about thirty.

Kendrick was especially attentive to her throughout the evening. He was seated between her and Mrs. Gandy. I was placed on the opposite side of the table and was in a position to observe them all. Every now and then she would glance from Kendrick to Miss Bang and then back to Kendrick, and I knew what she was enduring.

Then she suddenly left the table. She returned a little later and I was astonished at the change. Her lips were crimson and there was more than a touch of pink in her cheeks. She was livelier, too, and more determined. Her spirit was up. She broke into Kendrick's conversation with Miss Bang and soon he was devoting himself entirely to her. Her cheeks were now flushed. It was real color that had come into them.

And all the while Gandy was palavering in the merriest of moods.

I left early, before any of the others, and as I walked home I was moved by a stubborn determination. It was all clear to me now.

It wasn't jealousy. I am sure of that. Nevertheless, I hated that man Kendrick. In the light of later developments I know I was a meddling fool, but I try to find an excuse for my folly. It wasn't just conventional revolt, that I am sure, too. It was the angry realization that of all the men in the world, Kendrick was the least worthy of such a sacrifice. I had come to know him for a vain, trifling poseur, who played with paradox and made a show of knowledge which could hardly deceive a débutante. I determined it must end.

Yet in spite of my decision I deferred action. I suppose it was because I was beginning to realize Mrs. Gandy's position and felt genuinely sympathetic. She wasn't the sort of woman to be trivial or vulgar. My sympathies were no longer all on the side of Gandy. There was something to be said for his wife. Besides, I was certain things had not yet come to a serious pass. But over and above every other consideration there was the irrepressible instinct that my dear old friend, Gandy, was in danger, a hovering instinct that crowded every other consideration from the field.

The first time I became suspicious that Gandy was being wronged I stepped in.

I was walking down Broadway early one evening, homeward bound, when I caught a glimpse of Mrs. Gandy and Kendrick dashing by in a taxi. It was a momentary flash, but our eyes had met.

When I reached home I was told that Gandy had telephoned and wanted me to call up as soon as I came in. I did so and Gandy informed me that his wife had gone out for the evening with a party of girl friends and would stay away for the night. He wanted me to come over and keep him company. I dressed hurriedly and omitted my dinner.

So it had come to this! Deception and staying away for the night! I tried to decide on a definite course that evening. No dallying. It was getting dan-

gerous. Perhaps I was too late already.

Gandy received me himself at the door.

"It was a false alarm," he said. "Mrs. Gandy just came in a few minutes ago. She's lying down. She had an awful attack of nerves and abandoned her party. Come up and let's be quiet."

I was relieved. We sat down in the music room. Gandy was worried lest his wife suffer another breakdown and asked me whether he hadn't better send her away again before it got worse. We had not been talking long when Mrs. Gandy came in. I saw from the look she gave me that she did not trust me. As soon as she heard my voice she had come in, afraid to leave me alone with her husband. She wasn't timid now. There was something defiant in her manner.

Gandy threw me a glance of appeal, as if to say: "Try to cheer her up," and he sat down at the piano and improvised softly.

Under cover of the music we were able to speak. Our conversation was brief. For a single moment she weakened.

"You are mistaken," she whispered, answering the urgent question in my eyes. Then she stiffened and resumed her defiant air.

"Have you said anything?" she asked.

"No," I replied. "But I will unless it stops—immediately. I won't put up with it!"

I know there was something offensively dictatorial in my words, but I was determined and I didn't stop for delicate phrases.

She did not utter a sound. She just looked at me silently for fully a minute. I shall never forget that look. Hate—stark, stinging, primordial hate—shot out at me from those eyes. I never thought a woman's eyes could be so savage. Then, as if she had spent all her strength in that one tense moment, she shut her eyes, and sank back, and fainted.

VI

SHE never saw Kendrick again. I know that I stepped in just in time. But the Gandy household never was the place it used to be after that. I rarely went there, hardly once a month, and then only because I was so sorry for both of them.

Gandy was a wreck. At first he worried about his wife, and thought it was nerves, and wanted to send her away, and fussed helplessly and endlessly. Later, however, the whole thing took hold of him, worried him, tormented him, and finally broke him. They dropped their old friends and made no new ones. I never saw an unhappier household in my life. Gandy never quite understood. It left him stunned.

Once, when I felt he came near to sensing the root of the trouble, I tim-

idly suggested that he might offer his wife her liberty. To my astonishment he made the proposal that day. She rejected it unhesitatingly, and Gandy gave that up as a solution. Then I knew it was to go on to the end of their days.

I know I have the approval of many. I saved the "sanctity" of a home and kept a woman "honest." I did the right thing, but was it the best thing? And, after all, was it for me to choose or dictate? The choice, by right, rested entirely with Mrs. Gandy. It was for her to determine whether she wanted to be moral and true to Gandy or immoral and true to herself.

I may have the approval of many, but I am not sure that I have my own. And yet, of such is the fabric of life, If I had to do it all over again, wouldn't I do as I did?



THE PRESENCE

By John Hall Wheelock

MY love of you, like an angel
Entered in my door—
To make his silent dwelling
Beside me evermore.

His eyes are deep and solemn,
His eyes are pure and grave—
Sacred to reprove,
And vigilant to save.

Across my singing of you
He leans a golden head;
Nightly when I sleep
He watches by the bed.

He has your very lips,
Your forehead, and your hair:
If I should awake,
Still I find him there.



AND THE WOMAN MADE ANSWER

By Gordon C. King

AND when they had passed out of the city they came upon a woman whose garments were torn and stained with her own blood and who had done herself violence in her anguish. And He who was the Master was touched and said unto her:

"Woman, if thou hast but faith thou mayst be healed."

And the woman answering said unto him: "Thou art He that cometh in white raiment to heal the afflicted, but my affliction is beyond measure and even Thou canst not take away my sorrow."

And the Master put His soothing hand upon her trembling shoulder and looking deeply into her eyes, He said: "Woman, surely I, who turned the water into wine and made the dead to walk again, surely I can wash away thy tears and heal thy wounds. What manner of sorrow is thine?"

And the woman made answer and said: "Master, my husband hath been maddened by strong drink. He hath torn out mine earrings to throw among harlots, and the fair stone that he himself did place upon my finger in love, he hath placed upon the foot of her who dances before Herod. Mine only daughter, who trusted in him, he hath sold to the Romans for gold and silver, and when, returning from the city, he findeth me here waiting, certainly will he slay me."

And the Master turned away and wept, and he who was called a Stone went to her, saying:

"Woman, if thou wilt but follow the Master thou shalt be fed as the multitude on the mount and in the wilderness. Wilt thou but follow a little further and thou shalt taste the living water and dwell in holiness and gladness with Mary and the other women."

And the woman turned to him, saying: "Would to God that I, too, might follow, but I cannot."

And the disciple asked her again, saying: "And for what reason?"

And she whose affliction was beyond all measure answered: "I love my husband."



THE first kiss is always stolen by the man. And the last one is always begged by the woman.



THE proof that men do not understand women is that they love them. The proof that women do understand men is that they marry them.



THE MAN WHO GOT AWAY

By Albert Payson Terhune

RHEA BLANE had been quite ready for bed. Then she had decided she could not possibly sleep. So she had enrolled herself in a huge pink wadded silk dressing gown with green birds embroidered on it, and had put on a pair of very silly Turkish slippers all strewn with spangles and arabesques, and had gone into the second-floor sun-parlor to read herself drowsy.

She chose, for slumber-wooing, a volume of Browning's poems. Most of them she did not try, as a rule, to understand; contenting herself with "Prospice," "How They Brought the Good News," "An Incident of the French Camp," "Rabbi Ben Ezra," and others whose meaning she could grasp. But to-night she vowed to attack "Sordello" itself, in the hope of bullying sleep into coming to the rescue of a wearily puzzled intellect.

Book in hand, Rhea seated herself in a deep old leather chair under an electric swing-light. To be exact and realistic, she did not really "seat herself" at all; in the sense that mere men understand the term. This is what she did:

She stood with her back to the chair, her right hand resting on the right chair-arm. Then she put her right foot behind her, into the center of the chair-seat, and sat down upon it, afterward doubling her left knee and curling up her left foot alongside her body. All this in one movement; it is a maneuver known as "sitting on the foot";—of vast comfort and of varying grace, to woman; and to man almost a physical, or at least mental, impossibility.

Snuggling down thus in the great chair's depth, Rhea applied herself to the study of "Sordello." But her mind

simply would not stick to the involved sentences amid which it groped.

Rhea was just twenty; an age when Life first begins to look larger than Books. Memory was drawing her attention from the tedious poem to the events of the day. The same memory that had driven all present hope of sleep from her big eyes. At last, she shut both book and eyes; and, with the sort of morbid fascination that makes a child bite on a sore tooth, fell to visualizing again what she had spent the afternoon in watching.

The Blane house stood half way up Crescent Hill; Blank Terrace's show boulevard. To-day, that same exclusive boulevard had witnessed a right degrading sight.

The new State Penitentiary, three miles to westward, had been declared ready for occupancy. The old State Penitentiary buildings, three miles to eastward, had, that day, been abandoned for the new. Seven hundred and fourteen convicts had been transported from their former abode to its successor. Their route lay along Crescent Hill. The six-mile journey had been made in platform-wagons, each drawn by four horses and each holding ten prisoners, a driver and two armed guards.

It was not a pretty procession, this intermittent line of loaded wagons with thirteen passengers in each;—ten of them unlucky. The convicts, in their fitless and stiffly bagging striped suits, sat in a huddle on the springless seats. For the most part they were handcuffed. Even the "trusties" whose limbs were free were under close surveillance. Any sudden move, any shift of posture, was always enough to draw

upon the offender a quick glance from one of the uniformed guards and a significant lift of the short-barreled carbines.

Largely from behind closed blinds, and in outspoken or whispered disgust, Crescent Hill had watched the unlovely spectacle. All save Crescent Hill's well-reared children. These youngsters had run admiringly beside the wagons until shrieked back into their own domiciles by horrified parents or nurses. And for weeks thereafter "convict moving" supplanted Indian killing as the popular juvenile sport of the Hill.

Rhea Blane had stared in horrified interest at the wagons. She had not been able to tear her gaze or her thoughts away from them. From the coming of the first cart, in mid-afternoon, to the fall of dusk, she had sat behind a curtained window and looked out on the dismal parade.

A few—a very few—of the convicts had looked about them in frank or wistful or insolent curiosity, as they rode. But the majority had crouched with bent heads and narrowed shoulders; seeming to cringe from their temporary surroundings like obscene night reptiles whom the sun has surprised far from their lairs.

The guards' horrible alertness; their businesslike preparedness to shoot dead these fellow-men of theirs at first hint of escape, had sickened Rhea more than had the prisoners themselves. She had found the latter grotesquely alike; with their striped gray clothes, their grayish faces, their hair clipped to a closeness that made it seem gray; their general expression of gray apathy.

Rhea had watched until dusk closed in. Then had come a break in the straggling line. She had thought, as she tried to eat her way through a wholly undesired dinner, that the sorry show was ended. Yet three hours later, a dismal creaking of ill-oiled wheels had brought her to the window once more; and she had seen a new batch of unfortunates trundled by, under the glare of the arc-light in front of the Blane house.

Whereat, with a little shudder, she had decided to go to bed, and forget in sleep the sick thoughts of the afternoon. And, sleep offering no promise, she had finally turned to Browning to shut out the occasional wagon-creaking and ceaseless recollection of the tragedy.

The creaking was less frequent now. Minutes, even quarter-hours, would drag by, without a recurrence of the loathed sound. Then, just as Rhea would become certain the grisly performance was at an end, another wagon would lumber past. By force of will she kept herself from going to the windows to look out at these late-comers. She wanted to forget them—if they would let her.

So she cuddled the deeper in her chair, and renewed her dry bout with Browning. For a long time, now, no wagon had passed. And Browning began to receive his due amount of attention, if not of understanding. Then, far down the hill, came the beat of laboring horse-hoofs on the roadway; the jangle of harness-chain, the squeak and rattle of a laden and slow-moving vehicle.

The sound, through the night silence, jarred upon Rhea's nerves. Her brows contracted in irritation. Shutting her eyes again and laying down the book, she leaned back and waited for the miserable nuisance to be gone.

Nearer and louder came the wagon, plodding noisily up the hill. From long practice that day, Rhea could tell by ear just when each tumbrel reached the house and just when each passed on. The belated cart was very close now. In another minute its sound would begin to die away to eastward. Then—

A groan as of rending wood, a loud bump, a ragged chorus of hoarse shouts. And, through the looser volume of shouts a fierce-yelled sentence. Then a carbine shot—another—and a babel of bellowed orders and a multiplied scramble of running feet.

By this time Rhea Blane was at the long French windows of the sun-parlor, tugging at their catch. She threw wide

the swinging sashes and stepped out on the balcony. There, at the instant, she saw nothing, under the arc-light glare, but a sprawly black group. Then she made out running figures; and other forms that crowded close about an upset wagon whose left hind wheel had come off. After an interval, still another shot split the night.

"Get him?" presently bawled one of the men beside the wreck.

"I winged him, all right, all right," answered a guard who was trotting into the road, carbine in hand, from among the shadows of the shrubberied lawns. "He went cross-lots towards the street behind this. I got one squint at him for a second, just now, as he ran. That was when I let him have the third shot. I saw him give a lurch. Howe and Carson'll run him down, easy. He can't go far, with a bullet in him."

As he spoke, he took his place in the little group that was guarding the huddle of convicts. Rhea noted that, since nightfall, the number of guards on each wagon had been raised from two to six. At least, she counted four carbined men; and mentally added the pursuing Howe and Carson to the list.

She went back into the room, pushing shut the long window behind her. The thought of the man-hunt sickened her even worse than did the sight of the manacled prisoners cowering in a carbine-guarded half-circle at the side of the overturned wagon. She picked up the fallen book, stood with her back to the chair, her right hand on its leathern arm, and put her right foot behind her in the chair seat's center.

And there, midway of the maneuver, she paused and stood, frozen, moveless. For, the French windows parted and closed again with the lightning-swift soundlessness of a stage's trick-door. And in the room, confronting her, stood a man.

He wore a huge potato-sack wound around the upper part of his body, toga-fashion, covering him from the chin to below the waist. A pair of shapeless convict-trousers encased his legs. He was breathing fast, as from hard exer-

tion. His face was pallid and shaven; his dark hair close-cut. From an abrasion on his left temple a dark little trickle of blood was oozing.

"Please don't be frightened," he said, gesturing awkwardly with a shirt-sleeved arm that protruded from the sacking, "and please—*please*—don't scream. I'm not going to hurt you, you know."

"What are you doing here?" stammered Rhea, voicing the most banal of myriad phrases that sprang all at once into her mind.

"I—I beg your pardon!" he panted. "It must have startled you. If I'd known there was a girl in here—I hoped the room might be empty—and there wasn't any time to pick and choose. You—you see—they were after me."

"What are you doing *here*?" Rhea heard herself repeating, dully.

"I—you see—I was trying to get away through your garden. And they were all around me. And I doubled back—and they were around me again. And one of the men had a gun. He fired on me. I ducked into the shadow of the house. Then I saw one of them pull out a flashlight. They were going to 'draw' the lawn. I wouldn't have a chance of slipping through. And it seems I was to be shot at sight. So I shinned up a rain-pipe onto the balcony out there. But the electric light from the street makes the balcony as bright as day. I was too good a mark. In another second they'd have seen me. So I came in. I'm sorry."

To her own boundless amaze, Rhea Blane discovered she was not in the very least frightened. The convicts, as a mass, had shocked and sickened her. This convict, alone in the sun-parlor with her, had a wholly different effect. Despite herself, she thrilled at the adventure. In all her twenty years she had never before been so keenly excited. This man did not threaten, either in look or word or voice. Nor did he fawn nor cringe. Instinct told the girl she was in no peril from him. Impulse drove her on to enjoy to the full

this most unusual of happenings in the primmest of suburbs.

"I'm sorry," he was repeating, "I hope I didn't scare you—very much."

"I am *not* 'scared,'" she made answer, almost impatiently. "Why should I be?"

He eyed her in an admiration as open as it was unoffending.

"A strange man breaks in on you, like this, at eleven o'clock at night," he exclaimed, half under his breath, "and you don't even turn a hair. Talk about the Mother of the Gracchi and—!"

"Did anyone see you come in?" she interrupted, angry with herself that his compliment so pleased her.

"No," he said doubtfully, "I think not. I wasn't out there on the balcony more than a second."

"And now that you're here," she went on, "what's to be done? You can't stand there forever. I suppose I ought to give you up."

She watched him narrowly as she spoke. But the clean-cut face, to which a tinge of color was returning, did not pale nor show sign of alarm. She liked him for this. And her next words were gentler.

"You are wounded," she said.

"Am I?" he asked, in consternation. "Where? I thought he scored a clean miss."

"There, on your forehead. On the left side. At the temple."

He put up an explorative hand, and drew it away, blood-smirched.

"Oh, that?" he said relieved. "That's just a rub. The bullet paused to whisper 'Hello' to me as it went past. That's all. I hope it doesn't make you sick to see it. Does it look very disgusting, Miss—Miss—?"

"Blane," she supplied. "My name is Blane. But I'm—"

"Thank you," he replied, "my own name is Preston. Or it was when I had a name. Will you let me wait here a few minutes—or somewhere around the house—if it won't inconvenience you too much—until they move on? I don't think they'll look very long."

"You seem to take it for granted that I am going to compound a felony—isn't that the term?—by sheltering you."

"I'm not taking anything for granted," he answered in a new humility, "and I am not even asking you to do it; if it's against your wish or— or against your principles. It isn't my way—please believe that—to ask favors of women. If I'd known there was a woman in here to be frightened or offended by my breaking in—I'd have taken my chances outside. It was a caddish thing to do—to throw myself on an utter stranger's mercy. And that stranger a girl."

He turned and took a step toward the French windows.

"Wait!" she ordered. "Now you're taking too much for granted, the other way. I don't know what I ought to do. But I know what I'm not going to do. I'm *not* going to give you up, to go back to that ugly tomb of a prison. I pass it nearly every day, when I'm out in the car. It's on one of my favorite drives. And I'm not going to have that drive closed to me."

"Closed to you?" he echoed, puzzled.

"Yes. How could I go past the prison, knowing I'd sent someone back to suffer there—perhaps for years?"

Rhea Blane, in one of her sporadic fits of self-improvement, a year earlier, had for a brief and boresome space been a member of the local Social Economics Club. A lecturer had talked to the club, one morning, for nearly three hours, on Prison Conditions. Scraps of his lecture, or of as much of it as she had listened to, came back to her now. She recalled what he had said about the misery of having a number instead of a name; of never being addressed as "Mister;" of never hearing the word "please;" of the absence of every courtesy; of the hardening process that takes the place of reformation. And a wave of pity swept over her.

"Mr. Preston," she said, very sweetly, and accentuating ever so little the title, "Mr. Preston, won't your please sit down? You must be very tired."

Wonderingly, he made as though to

obey her. Then he hesitated, and stood beside the chair she had indicated. All at once, she divined that he would not sit while she was standing. His knowledge of the trifling courtesy pleased her. She seated herself—not on her foot—and he followed her example.

There ensued a moment of awkward pause. Then in Rhea's mind came other scraps of the Prison Conditions lecture. And she glowed with missionary zeal. This convict was young. His face was not evil. His voice and manner were more or less those of a well-bred man.

"Tell me," she asked, feeling her way, and seeking not to hurt his feelings, "if you make good your escape—is there any hope of your living a—a better life?"

"I don't—"

"I mean—you don't look like a habitual criminal. Is there no hope that you can retrieve the one false step—I feel sure there was only one—and make a man of yourself?"

His eyes were fixed on hers. She could read their expression. But she felt he was interested, perhaps, even impressed. And she went on.

"I'm only a woman, of course. And I've led a sheltered life. So I suppose I can't really understand. But it seems to me that no temptation should be strong enough to rob a man of his right to look other men in the face and to breathe God's free air in all the beauty and the glory of freedom. It seems to me a terrible and a shameful thing that one man should be afraid of another and that he should skulk in hiding; and that every tap on his shoulder should make him turn cold with dread; for fear it shouldn't be the greeting of some friend, but the hand of the Law."

Rhea was stirred by her own eloquence. She had not dreamed such a vocabulary and such powers of suasion were hers. And she had been quite right. They were not hers. She had read them, far better worded, in the pamphlet the Prison Conditions lecturer had distributed to the members of her club. She had read; had been deeply moved; had forgotten she had read; and

had now remembered the substance without recalling the source.

"There is so much in this world of ours," she continued, "for a strong man, a brave man, a clean man, to do. And any man can be strong and brave and clean. It is never too late. *'No star is ever lost we once have seen; we always may be what we might have been.'* I suppose the fight is fearfully hard. But isn't it worth while, Mr. Preston? There is a fierce joy in fighting. Why, Robert Browning, the poet, in *'Prospect,'* says—let me see—" fumbling with the book at her side, "he says: *'I was always fighting'*— No. It's—"

"I was ever a fighter; so one fight more, the best and the last?" suggested Preston.

"You—you know Browning?" she asked blankly; her eloquence oozing.

"I happened to read a few of his things—more than I could understand—some time ago. But forgive me for interrupting you. Won't you please go on?"

"You're laughing at me!" she accused, hotly.

"Heaven forbid! What do you take me for? But for you, they'd have a bullet through me, by now. I owe you everything. And to think you could believe I'd laugh at you! Why to my death-day, I'll never forget what you've said. I—"

There were steps in the hallway leading to the sun-parlor.

"Quick!" ordered Rhea, catching a fold of the sacking tunic. "Get behind the curtain there, by the windows."

He reached the long curtains at a single stride, and slipped behind their folds just as a maidservant came into the room.

"What is it, Mary?" asked Rhea, blandly.

"Please'm," said the maid in voluble excitement, "there's a policeman at the front door and two or three of those men with guns that was on the prison wagons. One of the wagons upset out here and there was a convict got away. You must a' heard the shooting and yelling and all that; even up here. And

one of the men says he thought he got a glimpse of the man that got away, on the balcony outside of this room. And—"

Rhea turned from the quaking servant, and, despite the latter's tearful protest, walked to the French windows and threw them open.

"There is no one on the balcony," she reported, "and I have been sitting in here for more than an hour. So I would have known if anyone came in through the windows."

"Yes'm. He said he wasn't sure. It was just that he'd thought so. I'll tell him."

The maid was gone. Preston came out from behind the curtain. His glance met Rhea's. And in the eyes of both of them glowed an almost infantile glint of mischief.

"And you got her away without even telling a lie!" he exclaimed admiringly.

"I am not in the habit of telling lies," she rebuked him.

"You are right not to," he approved, with fervor. "Habit spoils their zest and blunts their edge. It's always best to save them, fresh, for an emergency. To tell a needless lie is tempting Providence. Even white lies are apt to get tanned from exposure. Why, I remember once—"

He caught himself up, belatedly, at her frown of displeasure.

"I'm sorry," he said, meekly. "Won't you go on with what you were saying a while ago; about my leading a better life and—?"

"I am afraid any words of advice from me would be thrown away," she said loftily. "It would be more to the point to arrange some way for you to get out of here when the guards have gone."

"I can get out the way I got in," he answered. "It is easy enough. But can't I wait and talk with you just a little longer? I get so few chances to talk with—"

He checked himself. Mentally, she supplied the word "with a good woman;" and again her heart softened toward him. She said more kindly:

"I meant, how are you to get away in those clothes? You would be recognized as a—"

He glanced from the sacking to the convict trousers.

"Yes," he admitted, "I suppose I would. My costume isn't very conventional for street wear."

At his words, Rhea for the very first time became aware of her own attire's dearth of conventionality. She gave a little gasp, at realizing that her hair was in a massive braid down her back and that she was clad only in a nightgown, Turkish slippers and wadded dressing-gown.

"Wait here," she commanded, "I will be back in a few minutes. I'm quite sure no one will come in. But perhaps you'd better be on the safe side and hide behind the curtain while I'm gone."

Ten minutes later she returned to the sun-parlor. By a miracle of haste she had dressed herself; not only completely, but becomingly. And in her arms she bore a bundle of clothes.

"Here is an old suit of Mr. Blane's," she answered, as Preston emerged from behind the curtain; "and here's a hat of his. I'll put up a lunch for you, too, in case you get hungry. You can change the clothes in the shrubbery down there. But please carry the convict things off somewhere, before you throw them away. Don't leave them on the lawn."

"Thank you ten thousand times!" he cried, boyishly. "Oh, you're a brick! I didn't know any woman could be so white to a man in the rotten fix I'm in. I'll see the clothes are sent back to you—"

"Don't bother. It's an old suit! But," shyly, "there's something I wish you *would* send back to me some day, if you can. It's—it's—*this*."

As she spoke, she put something into his hand. Her face was very much flushed, and her manner had for the time lost its studied assurance. Preston looked down at his palm. In it lay a ring; with two diamonds of tolerable size, one on either side of a pearl.

"My father gave it to me, last Christmas," she hurried on, in dire confusion

"It's my own, to do what I like with. But I wish you'd buy it back sometime, if ever you're rich enough, and send it to me."

"Buy it back?" he muttered, bewildered.

"From the pawnbroker—the receiver of stolen goods—or whoever you sell it to."

"Sell it? Sell—? Won't you please tell me what you mean? What am I to do with this ring?"

"I haven't any money in the house. My allowance isn't due till tomorrow. And—and you'll need money to carry you out of reach of the prison officials, and—and to support you till you can find work—and—"

"I understand."

He spoke very gravely. Then, lifting the ring to his lips, he kissed it. There was something half-reverent in the action; something that robbed the girl of the right to be offended.

"I won't try to thank you, now," he said, a strange solemnity creeping into his eyes and voice. "But some day I shall. I'm going to try to devote the rest of my life to proving to you what your divine kindness has meant to me. And I *shall* prove it to you—if you'll let me. I'm going to take this ring. But I'd starve in the gutter before I'd part with it for food or for anything else. Some day, I'm going to bring it back to you. Some day, much sooner than you think. Oh, it was worth my being shot at. It was *worth everything*, to—"

A hand rattled the door-knob noisily, in interruption of Preston's ardent outburst. He darted toward the sheltering curtains. But he was too late.

The door swung open and an elderly man strode in. He was wearing an overcoat and had evidently just come from the street. Rhea hurried forward, guiltily, to intercept him.

"Say, little girl," boomed the newcomer, "what the deuce is all this rigamarole I hear about an escaped convict and a man-hunt all over my lawn? I met a policeman coming down the walk. He said some prison guards had just gone away and—"

He broke off short, his glance falling for the first time on the odd figure near the window.

"Who in blazes—?" he growled in ferocious amaze.

The eternal mother-instinct leaping to life in her at Preston's helplessness before such an onslaught, Rhea threw herself between the two men.

The new arrival took an angry step toward Preston; brushing Rhea aside as though she were a chair. His wide shoulders were hunched, his fists clenched; and his head was thrust forward and low, like an angry dog's. Preston stood his ground.

"Good evening, Judge Blane," he said pleasantly.

The householder checked his anger, advanced another step and blinked nearsightedly at the odd-draped intruder.

"Who—who—?" he sputtered; then "bless my soul, it's Billy Preston! What are you doing here, you young idiot, in that scarecrow rig? Been to a fancy dress ball?"

"No, sir," returned Preston, unruffled. "I've been trying to dodge a ball. A rifle ball, at that. If not a ball-and-chain."

"He is a convict," put in Rhea. "I didn't know he was an acquaintance of yours, too. He didn't tell me. He escaped. Oh, won't you please help him get away? I—"

"Rhea, are you stark crazy?" roared Judge Blane. "What tomfool joke is this, anyhow? Speak up, one of you? I don't like jokes—unless I'm on the inside looking out. Put me inside of this one, can't you?"

"Keep cool!" advised Preston, forestalling a reply by Rhea. "If I have been able to keep cool after all that's happened tonight, I should think anyone could. I didn't know this was your house, when I—"

"Then how did you happen to—?"

"To call? I didn't. I entered burglariously. I didn't know it was your house. I didn't even know you lived in Blank Terrace. Seeing you at the club, there, all the time, I supposed you

lived in the city. So when this young lady said her name was Blane, it didn't carry any meaning to me."

"Then how did you—? Oh, talk sense, can't you, and tell me what it all means?"

"I came out here this evening on business; to see one of our clients," said Preston. "He lives on Hampden Place, just back of you. As I started home, it occurred to me I could get to the station sooner by going down Crescent Hill. I didn't know where the next connecting street was. So I cut across lots. And half way over, I heard a shot, and then a man ran bang into me. I had just time to see he was in convict dress; before he brought down a broken handcuff on the top of my head. The next thing I knew, I was lying under a clump of bushes, with all my outer clothes gone."

"He had—?"

"It was quick work. I don't believe I was senseless thirty seconds. For the guards were still beating up the bushes, beyond; when I came to myself. Near me was this pair of striped trousers, and over some coldframes was this sacking. I put the things on me and started out. At sight of me someone opened fire at close range. And a bullet nicked me—*here*. The guards were evidently of the breed that shoots first and makes careful and courteous inquiries afterward. So I took to my heels. I climbed up to this balcony—"

"And you never told me!" broke in Rhea, hot with indignation, as the Judge exploded into guffaws of laughter. "You let me think—?"

"At first," he said, shamefacedly, "I couldn't get up the nerve to make a laughing stock of myself by confessing I'd been so utterly cleaned out by a convict and that he had gotten away with it. Then I hoped I might be able to escape, by your help; and that no

one would ever know what a trick had been played on me. I knew if it got out I'd be guyed to death."

"And you dared—?"

"And after that," his eyes holding hers with a strange intensity, while a deeper and vibrant note crept into his voice. "After that, I was willing to be your everlasting debtor; in the dear hope that some day I might—"

He caught himself up and, turning to the laughter-racked Judge, said more sanely:

"I've taken the liberty of borrowing a suit of yours. And now, if you'll lend me my carfare back to the city; and if, out of charity, you'll swear never to tell the men at the club, or at—"

"Oh, it's too good!" gasped the Judge, in a paroxysm of mirth, "too good to keep! The brilliant young criminal lawyer. Mr. William Preston—! Why, man, the crook who took your clothes may be a client of yours, for all you know! Keep it? I couldn't keep it a secret if I died for it. And—and the joke's every bit as bad on you, too, Rhea. A Judge's wife helping a convict to—"

"A—what?" croaked Preston, his throat sanded by a quick spasm of horror. "A Judge's—*what?*"

"Wife, of course. D'you mean to say she didn't introduce herself?"

"Certainly, I did," snapped the still indignant Rhea. "I told him my name was 'Blane' and—"

"Certainly, you did," affirmed Preston, in a curiously dead voice. "I—I must have forgotten. By the way," holding out his hand, "here is a ring, Mrs. Blane, that I picked up, off the floor, while you were away getting me those clothes. Is it yours? And—Judge, if you'll let me dress somewhere, I'll be off. You were right, about the joke. It is too good to keep. And—it's—it's all on me."



THE FULLBACK

By Ralph E. Mooney

THIS is to be a football story!
Ah. The reader sighs in joyous anticipation.

He knows there will be a handsome, powerful fullback, leading a team of forlorn hopes. There will be a girl who will sit in the grandstand with inspiring eyes. There will be "Buck" Hargis, a handsome but dissipated chap, who has traitorously bet some nine or ten thousand upon the team wearing red jerseys (and the reader will be allowed to speculate as to what team this could possibly mean). Buck will have bet this money in spite of the fact that there never was a college student who has had more than three dollars by Thanksgiving. Buck will drug the water-boy or sell the signals, or do something which will make everything go wrong. And then at the last minute the fullback will get the ball on his own five-yard line. He will look into the grandstand, see the girl—and run! He will dodge the guards, outspeed the tackles, stiff-arm the halfbacks and, like divinity, he will shake the ends.

He will run five yards, to the ten-yard line, five more to the fifteen-yard line. If the reader can count he will be able to follow him over every foot of the 105-yard run, until he makes a touchdown. He will then kick goal and be carried from the field on the shoulders of the students. Buck Hargis will propose to the girl and be rejected and she will receive the hero alone that evening in the quiet old library. By some miraculous process she will deduce that if he makes a success in football he will be a success in life. They will finally go hand in hand to Thanksgiving dinner, where father, of the class

of noughty-nought, will give nine rahs!

Ah, sighs the reader, this will be fine. On with the tale! Bring out the pipe smoke and sophomores and freshmen! Introduce me to the boys of Kappa Psi, who sing boisterous songs full of original things, like, "glory, glory to the team, men; the ball goes marching on!"

BUT, the reader is wrong. He has sighed too soon and is becoming hopelessly muddled. What's that? Perhaps if the story were told at some definite place in the manuscript he would be better able to understand—oh, all right, then! Here is the story of "The Fullback."

He was a football-player. He stood about six feet two and had a face like the fender of a Stockyards Line car in East St. Louis, Ill. But he was not full of trepidation and nervousness as the game came on. He had been playing for nine years and had practically no worries about the game, except that the faculty might fail in its efforts to make 10, 21, and 12 add to more than 43 on his examination paper in the "History of High Art."

And another thing! This was not a Thanksgiving game. The contest between Pikeway and Kansouri came about November 6.

And still another. Our hero, no other than the fullback, Jimmy McCarthy, was pretty certain about the result of the game. In fact, it was a foregone conclusion. Pikeway is a small college in St. Louis and it has about three hundred male students. Kansouri is a state university and it has some three thousand farmers from which to pick its football material. The Kansouri team in this game averaged 196 pounds

to the man and had been trained by a graduate of Michigan—a man who specialized four years under Professor Yost. Pikeway had one man weighing more than 160—our hero—and its coach was a former basketball champion in the Y. M. C. A. league.

Jim McCarthy cherished no illusions as to the outcome of this contest. Of course, there was a small chance that Pikeway might win. (This chance must exist to keep up suspense for a time to come.)

Buck Hargis was there! But he had tried to bet on Kansouri against his home-team in vain. When asked if he would put a little of his \$5.00 on Pike-way he asked the Kansourian if he looked crazy.

The whistle blew and the game started. By some mischance there was nowhere in the grandstand, which contained about two thousand respectable undemonstrative St. Louisans, a girl with eyes for Jim alone. There were about twenty-five Pi Alpha Gammas and about twenty-two Kappa Delta Thetas and about fifteen Theta Betas who were acquainted with Jim and who said he was a nice boy, only it was a shame he was so homely.

Jim was a senior, but he didn't rush into the play, after the kick-off, with the mental remark that the old team must win, for it was his last year at college. He knew that if he ever wanted a degree he would have to go to college about three years more to make up his back work and conditions.

Change to the present tense for dramatic effect.

Pikeway kicks off. Kansouri half-back captures the ball and is tackled on the thirty-five-yard line by the Pike-way right guard. After the right guard had received emergency treatment and has been carried off the field, the game goes on. The Kansouri quarterback gives the mystic signal, "23½, 14¾, 12⅛! Come on boys! Waltz time, allegro, crescendo, staccato."

There is a rush of feet. McCarthy is handled by four men who break through Pikeway's line. The whistle

blows. Kansouri's ball on the five-yard line! Now hold 'em! Hold 'em! Hold that line!

WAIT! WAIT! WAIT! The writer forgot himself that time. The five-yard line mentioned is that drawn five yards behind the Pikeway goal. What, already? Then this isn't a football game, it's a picnic. Well, that's about right—only it is good for us to be out in the open air once in a while.

As the Kansouri team walks to position for the kick, one of the backs catches McCarthy's arm.

"If you ain't too active, sport, you won't get hurt," he advises. "Now you just keep out of our way and everything will be nice and once in a while we'll give you the highball to make a tackle so you won't look yellow. But unless you get that signal, don't you interfere too much or we'll not be able to make our record and you'll go where that rightguard is now!"

The score is 86 to nothing when the first half ends. The coach does not exhort the men with tears in his eyes to go in and win for their dear alma mater. Instead he says:

"Well, boys, some day the faculty may relent and let us get a few students here who can play football. I'm sorry for you. Keep out of their way as much as you can so we will be in shape for our big game with Central High School next week."

Now the reader is expecting a last minute flash of fire. McCarthy, smarting under iniquity is going to grab the ball and make one touchdown, which will be the pride of the school when it realizes that a game defeat is more important than victory. Not much! College students aren't built that way.

Change to past tense. Game is over.

The final score was 156 to nothing. McCarthy was not carried off the field by the students. He was carried off by the ambulance men. He had nearly run himself to death. In fact, most of the Pikeway students were at home that afternoon, pressing their swallow-tails to get ready for the Freshman prom in the evening.

And as the crowd filed from the field it didn't look sad. It joked a great deal about the game. And what of the beautiful Eileen Jamieson, who last spring shook hands with McCarthy for five minutes as she said good night to him at the door of the girls' dormitory after a dance? Eileen did not leave the field weeping, nor did she tell McCarthy later that the man who went down to overwhelming defeat had learned the biggest lesson in life after all. No, for that very evening she eloped with Buck Hargis, who was president of the dramatic club and looked extremely handsome in a dress suit when he made love.

McCarthy wasn't received, aching

and sore, in a warm and comfortable library that night. Not he. McCarthy went to the Gayety theatre with a Kansouri halfback and ended up at midnight by weeping on the bar at the American Hotel because the Sunday closing law was about to turn him out into the cold world and make him a homeless orphan, "all lit up and no place to go."

And now, as this disgusting story is ended, the writer has a confession to make.

He has for long ached to write a thrilling story of football victory.

But he has never been able to get the local colour.

He is a graduate of Pikeaway.



MY LOVE

Jean Farquar

WITH art I made and brought her purple roses.
 I wrote her poetry and sent books.
 I took her to bourgeois plays because she liked them.
 I even listened when she played ragtime.
 Yesterday I said, "I love you."
 She gazed slant-eyed at me and murmured, "You silly ass."



A WOMAN'S idea of Hell: "Nobody loves me and my clothes don't fit."



INTELLIGENCE: the capacity for unhappiness.



BEAUTY

By James Oliver Winslow

RUNNING before the North wind, among the whitecaps, my canoe rounded the long point and rode quietly with the back swells. In the time required to light a pipe, all sounds grew murmurous. I heard the pulse of the lake beating indistinctly. The forest whispered. The water beneath me rose and fell, as if breathing, with an involuntary motion.

Out in the heart of the lake I still could see a multitude of activity. The sun shone there, from over the hill, whitening the crested tops of the seas. They churned along at the heels of each other, desperately racing to reach some beach before the night. But they were distant. Their haste intensified the haven's inaction, so that I thought their race was life, passing unheeded by this port of dreams.

From the shore the evening crept toward me.

A decadent cottage sat in the elbow of the land's curving arm, so old it must have been there always, the green arm stretching in reverence to protect it. Years past some dreamer had built it—both dreamer and his dream forgotten. Or possibly his dream returned on such an evening.

I grounded the canoe on the shelving beach nearby.

Bending to lift my pack, a voice stopped me.

"Here, what you doing here?"

A man more weatherworn than the cottage stood in its door. Out of the strip of leathern face, uncovered by ancient hat and beard, his blue eyes watched me. He was a tall, spare man, with bent neck and shoulders, and he came toward me across the gravel very slowly.

"I came around the point," I said. "Thought I'd rest."

"Where you going?"

"Nowhere, just on a trip."

He seated himself on the beach, laboriously, and looked at distance. I hardly dared break on his thoughts.

"Mind if I stop a while?" I ventured.

"No, set down." With a wave of his hand and without turning he offered the sweep of beach to me.

I sat near, smoking, thinking his silence well taken. It was in keeping with the twilight. Darkness was spreading from the shore in somber beauty, in mystic, deepening shades, soon to conceal this patriarch in his haven. This was the hour for which his years were lived.

"A fine place," I said softly. "It's beautiful."

"How?"

"It is beautiful."

He looked at me, puzzled.

"Say," he pondered. "A feller came by last summer and said that."



WOMEN are said to be very sharp observers, but nine-tenths of them still mistake prudence in their husbands for fidelity.



THE MAN-GETTER

By Edith Austin Holton

THE wedding day of Blanche Imogene and Ethelbert Ashton was set. "To each," says Hathi, 'his own fear.'" Blanche Imogene and Ethelbert fixed their eyes on the approaching event, each with studiously concealed trembling. Blanche Imogene choked back a dread that the long-desired prize might yet slip from her; Ethelbert tried to blind himself to the desperate hope that something might at the last moment relieve him.

Not that he disliked Blanche Imogene, or that she would, in his opinion, make him other than a good wife. The trouble was that he did not want a wife at all, and he faced the inevitable embarrassment of adjusting himself to his new possession. Ethelbert had been an only child. His father he could not remember. His mother had been a product of the age when true gentility included a steadfast delicacy of constitution. She had been sweet and pale, and given to sick headaches and tearful allusions to "your poor dear father, Ethelbert." Aided and abetted by her spinster sister of like mind, she had reared her son tenderly, with due regard for his personal habits, his digestion, his manners, and the freedom of his speech from slang. She prided herself on his difference from the rude sons of her acquaintances. She diligently implanted in him also the belief in the fragility of woman, the ideals of chivalry, the noble and protecting yielding of the strong oak to the clinging vine. Being a well-meaning, quiet youth of home-loving and bookish tastes, Ethelbert had lent himself admirably to his upbringing. He revered his mother and his aunt as superior beings. They the types of womankind

to him, to be given their own way even if mere man were inconvenienced by it.

When, at thirty, Ethelbert was left alone, it did not occur to him to change the even course of his life as it had run in his mother's time. He continued in the old house with the old servants. To be sure, with the advent of motor cars he had been tempted into the purchase of one. He wondered if his mother would have approved, but as no warnings came from the spirit world, he enjoyed his new investment in his own quiet way. Also he tried mixing more in public affairs, even going so far as to attend an open meeting of the Equal Suffrage League, where he found himself one of two male auditors, and was so impressed by his own portrait as a political tyrant that when his escape was blocked by a large lady who, with a multicolored plume waving from a helmetlike hat, demanded his signature to a petition for the civic rights of woman, he signed in trembling haste, and with a supreme desire to vindicate his chivalry. This ballot evidently was something the women wished for very much; far be it from him to deny them.

This—shall we call it feminist policy?—of Ethelbert's was what had led in the inevitable course of fate to the fixing of his nuptials with Blanche Imogene. Unlike her betrothed, Blanche Imogene was the youngest of eight children, whom, by right of juniority, she had bent to her will from the days when she had refused with quiet but firm determination to return the toys or other personal possessions which she had decided would add to her own well-being. "It will have to be as Blanche Imogene decides" had come to be the

motto of the family. They had long since forgotten any other condition of existence. Blanche Imogene wasn't a bad sort, however, unless you happened to be foolish enough to want to keep something she wanted, or do something in your way instead of hers. Even then, if you had the common sense to see that her way was right, she was altogether a pleasant person to live with. So Blanche Imogene had serenely taken what she wanted from life up to her thirtieth year—with one exception—that was a husband. In that she had failed; probably because other brothers were less indulgent than her own. There had been times when her hopes had risen high; when she felt that a manly heart, warmed by the cordial glow of her extra quality lobster Newburg digesting just below it, would open itself and lay its treasures of love before her. There had even been one swain to whom she had for a few golden days believed herself engaged, and had sallied forth to lay in stores of boudoir caps and dish toweling. But when at the end of a week of silence and anxiety, she had made tentative inquiries as to his whereabouts, through the medium of her bosom friend, Araline Perham, the latter, with some lack of tact, brought back the report that he had gone West for his firm and probably wouldn't be back for a year. Whereupon, after a tearful night in the arms of the sympathetic Araline, Blanche Imogene rose refreshed, bathed her eyes, powdered her nose, and, putting on one of the boudoir caps, sat down to plan the next campaign.

It was not long after this that the thought of Ethelbert Ashton swam into her ken. To be sure one saw but little of him; he was shy and retiring, but not unattractive personally, and he certainly was impeccable from a business point of view. If she could meet him occasionally Blanche Imogene was sure she could draw him out. Drawing out was, in Blanche Imogene's mind, her strong point with men. Brother Jim knew Ethelbert. To him she appealed.

"Ashton!" Brother Jim's inflection

was suggestive of remonstrance. "Why, Sissy, you don't care anything about Ashton. He's an awfully good old soul in his way, but pokey. I wouldn't if I were you—oh, well," as he saw the ominous lengthening of Blanche Imogene's upper lip, "have it your own way. I'll bring him along."

And he did. Ethelbert, suddenly dragged from the twilight calm of his home surroundings into the radiance of Blanche Imogene's high-power illumination, blinked somewhat, mentally. He was not at first sure why he was there; then it gradually dawned upon him that Blanche Imogene wished for his society. She was not the type of his mother and aunt. There was nothing fragile about her; indeed, in appearance she was more like the lady of the helmet. Without being actually large, she overflowed slightly; she had a floor-shaking, four-cornered gait, as if she had been originally intended for a quadruped; and it took him some time to forget the fact that she had a habit of sniffing. Also, she used much slang, which he abhorred. Indeed, she was a new sort, but a woman who wished for his company, so he stifled a sigh of regret at leaving his new reviews uncut, and went forth valiantly to consume rarebit at eventide. The latter required real valor on the part of Ethelbert, who had been reared in a holy regard for his digestion.

When, after some weeks of continued basking in Blanche Imogene's society, Ethelbert at last became conscious that something further was required of him, he was at a loss to understand the nature of the obligation. He finally woke to it. How he came through the succeeding weeks to the time when he found himself groom-elect was more or less of a blur to him. Only one thing was clear: Blanche Imogene had wanted him as a permanent possession. She had him. She wished him to call daily. He called. She manifested a desire for him to sit beside her with his arm about her, and kiss her not infrequently. He did it; somewhat awkwardly at first, but with increasing skill.

He found nothing actually unpleasant in all this if it had ended there; but the thought of marriage—of a wife! *What did he want of a wife!*

The news of the engagement was not suppressed. Blanche Imogene was not of a secretive nature. Hannah Maria, longtime servitor in the Ashton household, heard. She approached Ethelbert one morning as he sat reading his paper and sipping his coffee. She stood before him some minutes before he returned from the storming of Liège to his American breakfast room.

"Ah, Hannah," he said in his usual gentle after-breakfast manner, "you wanted to know my plans for the day? I shall be home as usual for lunch; for dinner—" he cleared his throat, and a slightly hunted look came into his eyes, "for dinner—"

"Ye'll be at yer fiancée's, I suppose," concluded Hannah. "Waal, Mr. Ethelbert, it's no great pleasure for me to say it, seein' how long I've been in th' fam'ly, but I guess you'd better be lookin' fer somebody t' take my place. If I'm to have a change it might as well be a whole one. I'd not like t' see yer ma's ways upset, as they're bound to be, so—"

She paused at the effect of her words. Ethelbert had shrunk into a pathetic heap of apology.

"I'm sorry, Hannah," he half gasped. "I did not know—er—realize exactly what I was do—that is, just how it would affect you; I'm sure—"

Hannah's eyes grew suddenly sympathetic. "Ye poor critter," she said, "ye poor critter, I might uv knowed! I'll take back my notice for the present and see first how things go."

"Thank you, Hannah," breathed Ethelbert, easing his collar with a trembling finger and drawing a long breath, "it will be a great kindness to me if you will."

The night before the wedding found Ethelbert chivalrously resigned, though a prey to apprehension. Its stars looked down upon a peaceful and triumphant Blanche Imogene. It would scarcely be possible for anything to happen in

the fraction of twenty-four hours that remained before she could take her place in the community as Mrs. Ethelbert Ashton. The house was in readiness for the final touches preceding the ceremony, quantities of wedding presents had been taken from their boxes and effectively displayed, and a weary family that had run ceaselessly to and fro all day in accordance with "as Blanche Imogene decides" slept at last.

All but Martha. Now, Martha was one of those futile elderly sisters who, given ten ways of doing anything and one of those wrong, will, with unerring accuracy, select that wrong way. Unable to sleep after the excitement, she tossed restlessly. At last, after vain attempts at slumber, she made up her mind that since she gained nothing by staying in bed, a trip downstairs to view once more the festive preparations might divert her and prove quieting to the nerves. Softly she drew on bathrobe and slippers and crept down the stairs. She walked slowly from one room to another, altering here and there some article which to-morrow would be replaced by unappreciative hands. It was all beautiful. She drew a deep breath—and discovered that she was hungry. She had been too busy to eat before, now she would get something from the pantry. Nibbling a piece of cake, which she vaguely knew was not a proper lunch for midnight, she emerged into the moonlit kitchen. Why had they left all those present boxes there? The room was stacked with them all across the side. Martha's sense of order was shocked. They must be disposed of before to-morrow. She glanced at the moonlit yard, then at the boxes. Opening the door, she leaned out on the threshold. It was quite warm, though there was a little breeze coming up. The grass was dry. There had been no rain for several weeks. With as little noise as possible, Martha gathered up armful after armful of boxes and carried them out, piling them in a neat pyramid back of the shed. When they were all out she re-

turned to the house for the oil can and matches.

* * *

The prolonged ringing of the telephone broke Ethelbert's restless slumber. Across the wire came the excited voice of Blanche Imogene.

"Ethelbert, oh, do come! The house is on fire. The boys are fighting it, and I need you to help me—oh, dear—"

Ethelbert dropped the receiver and sprang for his clothes. In five minutes he was driving his car through the town at a more rapid pace than his law-abiding soul had ever permitted before. Through the quiet main street of the sleeping village—around the corner. He could see a faint red flare in the sky. A little more speed now—crash!! As the car slipped down over the embankment Ethelbert's mind reviewed in the conventional manner all his inconsequential past, but the fact that loomed largest in his thoughts was that he would not be married the next day.

When he came to himself he was conscious chiefly of Blanche Imogene and of a fullgrown pain in his left leg. Blanche Imogene was sobbing. He spoke soothingly to her and inquired into the details of the recent past. Whereupon the lady became romantically overcome at his recovery, and summoned the rest of the family. All but Martha, who was having hysterics in her room and was not particularly missed. The fire had done little damage. The dry grass had caught and the flames had spread to the shed and blazed up rather alarmingly, but prompt action had put them out. No one knew much about his accident, or how it had happened. The car had gone over the bank by the Simonds'. His leg was broken and his head cut slightly. He listened with a feeling of growing satisfaction. He felt very pleasant toward Blanche Imogene.

"Things might be worse," he remarked very originally. "Of course it

is too bad to spoil the plans for the wedding, but—"

"Oh, the wedding! That will be all right now," rapturously exclaimed Blanche Imogene. "I was so afraid you might not come to in time. The doctor said after I had begged and begged that if you were conscious in an hour he would let us have the ceremony just the same."

Ethelbert saw his new-born hope turning pale. With a frantic grasp at reprieve, he forgot for a moment that this was no subject for a modest man to discuss with a lady.

"But my clothes," he gasped. "How can I dress with this weight on my leg?"

"Oh," said Blanche Imogene, casually, "it isn't necessary."

"Not necessary!" Ethelbert's pallid face surged crimson.

"Not at all," was the imperturbable reply. "The boys will fix you on the couch with a coverlid over you, and everything else can go on just as we planned it. I think it is beautiful and romantic. Aren't you glad, darling, that it has turned out so nicely?"

Ethelbert moved his head weakly on the pillow. "Yes, dear," he said. "I think I would like to sleep a little now if I can."

* * *

After Ethelbert and Blanche Imogene had received the congratulations and condolences of the wedding guests, and the last friends and relatives had, as two of the ribald confided to each other, viewed the remains and passed out, Mrs. Ethelbert Ashton bent over her husband and kissed him tenderly. He pressed her hand weakly, as she half tearfully and wholly complacently breathed:

"Oh, Ethelbert, darling, wasn't it a perfectly beautiful wedding?"

Ethelbert brought a wan but valorous smile to his lips. "Yes, dear," he murmured, "it was—stunning!"

Then he closed his eyes and quietly fainted.



KERFLOP!

A STUDY OF THE DESCENT OF MAN

By Harry Kemp

HE lay flat on his back in the bed, staring vacantly and steadfastly into the general atmosphere. At times he automatically clutched at the coverlet. No, he was not a sick man, but a baby whose appearance on earth might still be measured by days. The nurse came and lifted him up. He described an enormous trajectory in space comparable to the swing of a star in its orbit. The room flowed and whirled about him in a gray yielding surface broken with motions of indistinguishable objects which punctured his space by entrances into it, and disappearances out of it.

The nurse, having performed a necessary function, laid him gently down again, dry and clean. And once more the pepper-and-salt surface about him settled into its customary arrangement.

There was nothing even remotely suggesting intelligence or a human soul, in his eyes, as yet. He had not yet learned to cry at the sight of the shapes that loomed suddenly and menacingly above him. So far, he only squalled when hungry—which was often enough for his weary mother, who, from the first, insisted on nursing him.

But, as he had nothing to do but lie there and be taken up at frequent intervals and fed, after a few days things outside himself began to make an impression on his consciousness. A painful curiosity seemed to be trying to focus the blue-china vagueness in his eyes to some gathered point of comprehension. At times he wore the constrained, puzzled expression of a near-sighted man trying to see things at a great distance.

"There is no doubt of it—he is beginning to take notice of things!" they said. He soon did so unmistakably. The towering objects that detached themselves from his stationary plane into startling motions woke the centuried memories of primitive fear within him . . . sudden forms were thrust over him from space . . . gripping, tentacular things caught hold of him and whirled him aloft as high as the stars . . . round, opaque, white discs, opening and closing themselves in a threatening manner, emitted various noises. He was instinctively fearful of being devoured when they leaned over to kiss him. . . . He yelled with great terror.

Time and again they searched for safety pins gone wrong, and, finding none, voted him an unreasonable baby.

It was not long, however, before the mother was delighted with his recognition of her as she stooped over him. For now she had become to him the one object that brought that sweetness-in-the-mouth which appeased the continuous raving in his mid-region.

"Only look! . . . he knows me!" the mother cried, as she took him up while he clutched tightly.

But still to him there was neither up nor down, backward nor forward. They still undulated him along the gray, yielding plane as they lifted him up, turned him over, bathed him, and tended his helpless infancy. . . .

There was such great strength in his arms that he now wanted to reach, clutch, and pull. First he discovered the far foreign territory of his toes. With great joy he pulled them toward

his mouth, just as if they didn't belong to him. His delighted mother found him dining off his toes with audible gusto.

After that he clutched the sides of the little bed, and pulled. With a wonder which was half an admixture of fear and half of joy, he found himself moving . . . he repeated this from day to day . . . as his strength increased and he grew accustomed to the motion, he pulled and wriggled with yet more abandon.

The miracle of motion was now for the first time upon him. He felt all the joy of the first protoplasmic thing that ever moved. He got a passion for wriggling about. But one day he wriggled and pulled too far, and received his first lesson in up-and-downness.

It was then that he discovered that all was not surface . . . something invisible seemed to drag him down. He fell through a hole in his level world. The first treachery of space was upon him. He landed with a great thump, so violent that it knocked the wind out of him. Far up into the baby infinite shot bed, table, and chairs—and now these objects were nothing but straight, black lines . . . he only saw their legs . . . to him they had entirely gone away . . . above him stretched the bottom of his former universe. It was as strange and terrible an experience to him as it would be to a grown-up man, if he were to fall unexpectedly through the sky to the surface of an alien planet. . . .

But it wasn't this that made him set up a howl . . . it was his first real bump and it hurt . . . then he ceased crying and looked up . . . he looked at his hands, too . . . he had pulled something down with him from that world of his . . . an oblique, connecting link . . . the coverlet which his frantic hands had clutched in his fall . . . up, up it reached to the very sky . . .

His mother rushed in. She was now a tremendous being whom he did not recognize till she bent down and gathered him up to her bosom. He had seen her, from head to foot, for the

first time. She took him up and mumbled him all over with her mouth. And when she assured herself that he was not seriously hurt, she was proud of his increased activity . . .

From that time on it wasn't long before he was wriggling on the floor, living a sub-aerial life at the roots of things. His mother and father (whom at last he was beginning to take account of) and the visitors and servants, were to him merely Legs and Feet, except when they lifted him up to the sky of their faces, on a level with the horizon of their mouths and eyes, to look at him and kiss him. . . .

Now he gave over his wriggling and dragged himself about with contortions . . . and sometimes the things which he caught hold of would let him pull himself up to them, sometimes they would unexpectedly come to him, accompanied by a perilous descent of miscellaneous objects from mysterious upper spaces.

Now he could crawl on all fours . . . he cooed in exultation over his further projection into the infinite. . . .

The half-grown house-cat, elusive and gleamy-eyed, became his great objective, especially the long, black, trailing end of it, which had for him a fascination almost hypnotic. With a tenacity of purpose that amounted to an obsession, with an enthusiasm that would have put to shame many a great leader of men, most of his waking hours were absorbed in pursuit of the cat's tail . . . however, if he failed to lay hold of that, with infantile impartiality he closed down his gripping hands gleefully over any part of its body—face, nose, ears, legs, the loose skin of the belly—it was all the same to him. But the cat, slowly and with dignified disdain, nearly always eluded its persecutor. Though several times, when he caught it a-drowse, he closed his hands mercilessly upon it, with all the strength of an unsophisticated infant's grasp, at the same time emitting gurgles of triumph.

The outraged animal, finding itself caught as in a vise, and knowing, from

domestic instinct, that it had to deal with a child, would mew growlingly and administer half-withheld blows with its paws. And, like as not, the mother would then, if near, give the cat a cuff on the head that would make it think an ash-pan of sparks had been emptied over it. And it would skurry out of the house and gently and reproachfully wash its face from the safe vantage of the roof of a neighboring shed.

Thus the cat learned to have great respect for the baby, and to put more space between them. But, as the obsession still persisted, and as the cat now ever eluded, the eager child got vindictive bumps from legs of tables and corners of bureaus and book-cases, all of which objects seemed to be in active league with the cat.

But a new discovery made him forget his pursuit . . . he found out that, by grasping objects about and above him, he could draw himself up into space. Again his world was enlarged, though table-leaves now met him with terrific force and rocking chairs whipped back against him with what seemed personal malice—as if the things dwelling overhead resented his invasion of their province and were combined together to make every effort to press him back into his two dimensions. . . .

When he got an unusually hard knock his mother would take his side and strike the offending object for him, saying, "Naughty table," or "bad chair"—and this punishment would please him so that he would sometimes instantly stop crying and even chortle with satisfaction. . . .

His conquests of space, from this time on, were conducted with great rapidity and scientific thoroughness. In spite of his mother's preternatural watchfulness, he had daily collisions and tumbles.

He fell down stairs . . . he fell through the kitchen door out into the back yard . . . he tumbled off his high chair. . . .

And he soon learned how treacherous were the supports to which he adhered trustfully with his hands. Once,

for instance, he pulled dishes and dinner into a clattering heap about him by trying to raise himself erect by means of the tablecloth. And to his dismay he was himself whipped for this, and not the object which had played him false.

It was indeed a perilous and inexplicable world, but he soon embarked on a new voyage of discovery.

One day, while holding on to the leg of a chair and still standing, with great hazard and daring he reached for the rung of another close by. It had been his custom, up to this time, to drop on his hands and knees and crawl from one to the other of the objects by which he erected himself. . . .

Soon, with additional audacity, he attempted a vast, Magellanic circumnavigation of the table, by gripping the edges of it . . . but, plump, his legs gave way, and down he collapsed into the two-dimensional world from which he was striving to escape.

His proud father and mother now took him in hand . . . by the achieving of three or four steps before he went down, he had soon discovered an airy independence that gave him as much joy as the first flight of a bird. The world of independent motion lay widespread before him. But at first he would sway giddily, like a man at a great height, seized with vertigo. It surely frightened him to see the floor so far below . . . but by looking at the level of the chair-seats, he managed to levitate shakily each time further and further through space, though at times it gave him a great sense of reassurance to find himself squat on the familiar, carpeted floor. He felt as an exhausted swimmer who lets down his feet and unexpectedly finds bottom. . . .

And now a new series of bumps, tumbles, falls, and headlong precipitations overtook him. For he was trying to get on top of things, he was discovering that some things were higher than others and could be climbed upon. Walking had introduced him to height, and he wanted more height. He now got quite a practical knowledge of up-

and-down-ness. He became a rubber ball, a rolling hoop, a stone flung into space.

He stepped off into the air, time and again, from the seats of chairs on to which he had climbed when his mother's watchfulness had relaxed. At first he did this with all the nonchalance of the straw-tickled frog . . . but bruises and aching bones got from such descents and aviations taught him caution at last. He learned to feel his way with his feet, to perceive different levels and gradients by instinctive adjustments, while in motion.

Also, he discovered farness and nearness. For, whack, he got it on the side of the head or forehead when he miscalculated distances. He found out that few things would get out of his way, also that he could not walk through them.

And, amid all this turmoil, the distracted mother said:

"Thank God that a baby's bones are pliable and soft."

When he first learned to break into a rolling run after his pet dog, out on the grass, in the front yard, it intoxicated him as wine does a drinker of water. . . .

And now the whole horizon-circled world of Space lay open before him. And it was no longer a place of frightful mystery, lures, and snares—but reasonably safe. . . .

He discovered fields to run barefoot in, brooks and ponds to wade and swim in, windows to go in and out at, hills and trees to climb. He walked along fences and on top of sheds . . . he climbed over and under, up and down, barking his shins, stubbing his toes, raising welts as big as pigeon eggs on his forehead. . . .

He shouted aloud when he saw things running and flying. He threw things just to see and hear them break. He went leaping with joy behind circling hoops. Amid clouds of dust he hooked rides on the backs of buggies while the belligerent drivers struck vainly backward with slender whips to dislodge him. . . .

Space . . . space . . . space . . . he plunged himself into it in all directions, as a yearling, let out in its second Spring, rolls with abandon in happy and ample pastures.

* * *

But with the sacred masculine ceremonial of putting on long trousers his space-freedoms came to an end. For he put mental trousers on his soul, at the same time. He stepped decorously into the harness of the proprieties and conventions; he adopted a neck-twisting starch collar and stalked about with all the grotesques dignity of pubescence.

Space, glorious space, had now become to him a mere commonplace. He put the consciousness of it by as good Christians, having finally become angels, are reputed to put by all perturbations of sex. Or rather he gave it over into the charge of that adroit and brainless mechanician, the Subconscious, himself becoming the mere automaton of his motor instincts.

He lost the thrilling, ignorant abandon of tumbling, sprawling, ever-surprised babyhood, the perilous innovations, the ever-new explorations of the Commonplace granted to early childhood, the adventuring, neck-breaking recklessnesses of breathless boyhood.

As he rounded into manhood he became so respectable that he blushed whenever he thought of the back of his neck.

Whenever he went to a Sunday School picnic he was so careful of the creases in his trousers that he forgot to enjoy himself. He sang in the Church Choir. He began to be pointed out by envying mothers as a model for their adolescent sons. So he grew into that intolerably sincere person, the civilized hypocrite.

For panic-stricken society, always shying at the shadows of realities, while letting the realities go, always fearing that any adventurousness carried beyond boyhood might shoot over into the spiritual and revolutionary-panic-stricken society had rushed forward and made him fast in his place, as the citizens of Thebes, in ancient times, ran

out, all together, and tied down the statue of their favorite god with many ropes, when the daring sculptor put the right foot in advance of the left—the legitimate walking posture of all those with any of the red-cheeked vitalities of motion left in them. . . .

The preternatural purity of the young man's life now led the Village Blacksmith to prophesy, the latter being a man of practical vision and one not to be deceived by passing appearances.

"You jest wait," he'd say to the gossips gathered about the door, "you jest wait," he'd remark, standing there in his yellow-scorched leather apron, "till that young feller does cut loose . . . he used to be a hellion . . . and he'll be one again before long . . . the way he's actin' is agin natur."

Then he would sagely adjust his spectacles, for the constant smoke had dimmed his sight, and step inside to work again.

And, as if to fulfil what had been foretold of him, the youth now began to stir with vague disquiets. At night strange dreams hovered above him. Space began to haunt him again in all its vivid pristine realities. He dreamed of dropping down sheer abysses, unhurt, from ledge to ledge. He shot out, belly-downward, poising buoyantly and confidently over wide, windy gulfs of air under and above which stars shone dim and far away.

In the morning he would wake feeling that a past life was reaching out for him. He grew paler, more silent, more nervous, from the tide of change that was heaping up within him. He took to biting his finger nails.

His parents had thought that he might decide for the ministry, but he had dwindled at last to being a pale and properly attired grocery clerk in the general store at the corner—trusted and believed in by his hard-mouthed, keen-eyed employer.

But he was groping in his mind for something—groping for he knew not what . . . along with the grey nervousness that this brought upon him came

fitful aberrancies of memory—vagran-
cies of thought beyond his control. He began to mix orders, to make mistakes in calculations. This last delinquency his employer could never endure—so, after a few such, he discharged him.

It was on a Saturday afternoon that he left work. . . . It was on a Sunday afternoon that he ambled down the front steps of the house for an aimless, restive stroll into the fields. Carefully he picked his way across a brook, stepping from stone to stone to preserve the shine of his blackened shoes, which shone like two tiny, twin mirrors.

As chance would have it, he came at last to a pasture lot where the local rowdies, in defiance of all godliness, congregated every Sunday afternoon to play cards.

Starting out of his day-dreaming, and noticing them when too late, he started to walk by them evasively. But the rowdiest of them all, the first to catch a glimpse of him, called out, "Here comes the sissy boy!"

"Let's catch the minister's under-study and make him drink!"

Before he could evade, they had him, arm and leg. Despite his protest, they rammed the mouth of a whiskey flask between his teeth. A fire bit into his throat . . . but at the same time a grateful, expansive warmth began to spread through his blood. . . .

"Come, we'll make a man of you yet!" bawled one of the toughs.

So, with oaths, wild laughter, and scurrilous jests, they made him happily drunk. Then they let him go. . . .

Again his hands and feet seemed far-away alien members. He wanted to push his hands into space, to let them roam about into the unplumbed infinite which once more began just in front of his nose. He plumped down in the lush grass and brought his foot to his mouth. . . .

He got up. He reeled, singing, through interminable meadows . . . the fresh greenness of childhood spread far and near again.

He tried to climb an inviting tree.

He fell hilariously on his back. The earth swirled gloriously about him.

He zigzagged homeward, rolling with the many joys of motion. Fences once more beckoned their old invitations to climb. And the villagers stood behind curtained windows, aghast, watching the Proper Young Man as he tumbled assiduously from the tops of their rickety fences.

So, having made pastured horses snort and run and cows stop chewing their cuds to stand in innocent staring amazement—having waded through various brooks without care for either shoe-shine, or creased trousers, having stampeded the general mind of the villagers into bucolic consternation—he won home at last.

And, oh, the joy of negotiating the front steps of the stoop! With hazardous elation he navigated the parlor floor, which seemed miles below. He took gasping breaths of half-fearful joy . . . his motor muscles no longer coördinated with his subconscious instincts. It was delightful to try to make his legs go the way he wanted them to go, and to have them drop short or fail, just as they did in babyhood. . . .

Now, with infantile glee, he went down on his hands and knees, creeping about, no longer able to stand . . . the chairs and tables seemed the underside of a mighty universe above him. . . .

He crept painstakingly upstairs toward his room . . . thump . . . thump . . . thump . . . he hurtled down . . . with drunken persistence he finally made his room. . . . He pulled himself upward, all the upper spaces trying to keep him under again. . . . Finally he succeeded in flopping over onto his bed. He lay breathing heavily . . . space had again become a pepper-and-salt plain. . . .

* * *

In spite of the ensuing headache, he woke with happiness and a feeling of freedom which he had missed for years. . . .

For whiskey had reintroduced him to the freshness of unconquered spaces which he had lost with his boyhood. . . .

His character now took a complete shift . . . only a few drinks, and again the world would become novel to him, and spread about him in strange, alluring amplitudes. . . .

And so he became the village drunkard.



THE CLERK

By H. S. Haskins

MY fate holds my body tied down to a chair.
The sun is bright and the day is fair.
Lo! some men work in the open air.

Some men work with their muscles taut,
My own right arm has shrivelled to naught
At the puny tasks which the years have brought.

I hark to a chisel which bites hard stone,
Who drives it thus with blood and bone?
Oh, God! for his shoulder instead of my own!



THE BLEMISH

By Robert McBlair

I DON'T like to begin a story about the esthetic—about art—by telling first of a notorious murder trial, but the story really begins there. You of course remember when Hardy was tried for murdering Galt, and if you followed the case at all you will remember the touching pen pictures of his white-faced, beautiful wife, who stayed near him throughout the ordeal and whose faithfulness won all hearts, even though she could do him no good. For, you will recall, he admitted throughout that it was a cold-blooded crime, that he got Galt drunk in order to kill him—and he seemed, for some strange reason, to even welcome the verdict of guilty.

There has been much gossip about the case, particularly among their friends, and some injustice done, and now that all of the parties are dead, I think the time has come when the truth should be told about this matter and an end put to whisperings.

Now that all of them are dead, I said. Galt, of course, was killed by Hardy in the café that night; his wind-pipe was crushed by Hardy's great thumbs and his last breath gone before we—the waiters and I—could get around the overturned table and stop that lion-like worrying of the prey and tear away that horrible grip. Then Hardy, of course, was sent to the chair. He went through the damp stone corridor to the death chamber—I had just told him the last good-bye and was standing at the grated door of the cell—with the eyes of a man who has none of the love for life. In fact, the way he passed with his white face down the corridor, having looked over his wife's head in a shining stare of silence when

I brought her to say good-bye, showed a complete negation of life and what it held, and almost a gleam of welcome in his blue eyes for the door they were opening for him at the corridor's end.

As to my old friend Margaret Hardy—the first woman I ever proposed to—when the door closed behind him, she turned to me with a blanched face, but with a chiseled and set expression and in a new, hard voice said, "Take me home."

She did not weep, only as we rode through the congested streets, once she clenched her two little hands and raised them and said, "Jack! Jack! Jack!!"

But both Hardy and Galt were called "Jack." And, to this day, there is no one who knows which Jack she meant. For, as you may have heard, although it was hushed up a bit, that night she turned on the gas in her room, after closing the windows, and opened the veins in both wrists.

It's a ghastly tale, and brings back sad thoughts I had hoped were dead, but now the worst of it is over and I can tell you the cause of it all, which is what I began this for.

Galt, you know, was an artist, but you may not know that he was not only an artist by profession, but an artist by nature. His tall, slender figure, his idealistic eager face, all proclaimed it. I had almost said that he was more of an artist than he was a man, but this is not true. He was manly enough, but he walked through life with his tender artistic sensibilities always stripped bare; he was overcome, enraptured, enthralled by this world's rare sights of beauty, and tortured if forced to endure the coarse, the base, the ugly.

This, with him, was particularly true as to women. He was very susceptible to the other sex, *provided* the woman was beautiful. I have seen him fall desperately in love in a week—and fall out as quickly on coming upon his adored one in an unbecoming hat, or finding her touseled and unlovely after tennis.

"And the curse of it all," he told me once, "is that after the illusion is lost, it is gone forever. No toilette, no re-accession of beauty can efface that sight of unloveliness, which I feel and remember as keenly as if it were a taste in the mouth."

I remember him well as he said it, his sensitive features awry in disgust, his delicate hands thrown out in repulsion.

Now Margaret Hardy was beautiful. There is no doubt about that, and if there were, it would be settled by the fact that Galt adored her. He fell the very night when Jack Hardy, knowing his idiosyncrasy, brought him home to dinner and introduced him with much pride to the bride he had won from the South some six months before. Her beauty was as near to perfection as I have ever seen, and I have painted the portrait of many a beautiful woman. Her hair had that indescribable gloss or sheen of rich red gold, her eyes were a fascinating but undoubted green, her skin was fine and warmly tinted, her teeth were almost artificially perfect, her figure was sublime—tall and lithe, yet with the bosom and limbs of a goddess.

Hardy had had a hard time winning her. There were other suitors, of course, and there were ugly rumors about—as rumors will spring up in our set—to the effect that the coincidence of her father's business necessities and Hardy's connection with a big banking house were largely responsible for her decision. Unfortunately—and undoubtedly—some of this was true. But certainly she was a good wife to the adoring Hardy until there came, somehow, a rip in the canvas.

Just what caused this rip at first will

never be known. For one thing, however, her father's business, despite what she may have expected to come from the marriage, tottered for a while and then collapsed—and her father with it, a nervous wreck.

I remember well her appearance when she began to go out again after her visit south to nurse him. It seemed to me that from that time commenced the occasional bitter note in her always sparkling talk, and it was generally noted that she entered the season that year more gayly—more recklessly, I should say. Perhaps a portrait painter catches these things that others miss, but I am sure that I noticed to begin about this time a certain inconstant glitter to her eyes, a certain turning to anyone, to anything—more and more often to wine—for the moment's diversion that was forgetfulness to one who had pangs of grief to quench, bitterness to forget.

Another thing may have been Hardy's jealousy. He was jealous of a diletante poet, named Joel Devant, and of anyone else who looked three times at Margaret. And he was somewhat jealous of Galt.

We, on the outside, should have said he had good reason to be jealous of Galt, who seemed to us to be madly in love. For Margaret accepted Galt's attentions, and he went there constantly, particularly when Hardy was away, as was very often the case. He went there constantly, that is, for a long time, but for some reason that nobody knew he slacked off perceptibly of a sudden, and scarcely went at all.

But I suppose Hardy put all this down to Galt's craze for beauty. In fact, I'm sure he did, for with his nature he would otherwise have been rabid with jealousy as he was towards Joel Devant. And I know that it was with the greatest friendliness that Galt, Hardy and I—only the three of us—went on that fatal night to Victor's, the little Hungarian restaurant.

Hardy had just returned from a business trip, and I sensed he had had some row with Margaret, for his promi-

nent brow beneath his thick mixed-gray hair held contradictory lines when he laughed—trust an artist to notice!

He swung his six feet of bulk in on Galt and me at my studio. Often, as a relief from his business cares, he would come for an evening with us easy-going men of the palette and brush.

"Well," he roared, crushing my valuable right hand in his huge paw, "but it is good to be back among friends after those cut-throats in Chicago. What's on foot for to-night?"

"You're on my foot, you brute," I remember Galt told him, "for heaven's sake sit down and give me back my hand."

If we had left wine alone it would never have happened. But of course I could not have known in advance. Galt was always a fool with a little liquor in him, but then he was also more entertaining, more of his soul was on top. He drank no more than we did, although, as usual, it did affect him more. Looking back now, I can realize that I ought to have kept Galt sober—absolutely sane. But whose foresight isn't better than his foresight?

The Hungarian orchestra at Victor's thumped and twanged and tuned up. Then a haunting, creepy sort of thing began to steal from the violin and, listening, before I knew it I had tears in my eyes. I have always claimed that mop-haired leader is a genius. I blinked, ashamed, and looked down at my glass in reproach, but when I glanced at Hardy, I saw that he, too, was affected. There was a very wonderful, far-away, tender look in his blue eyes, and I knew he was thinking of Margaret.

The music sank and trembled, rose again in a wail and melted into silence. Galt's slim figure was low in his chair, his shoulders almost on a level with the table, his delicate fingers on the glass of red wine. There was a clatter of applause about the room. Then Hardy cleared his throat and said in the tenderest voice to Galt:

"Jack," he asked, "why is it that you

haven't been to see us of late? You know Margaret's awfully fond of you, and I think she's a little hurt."

I am sure Hardy was too moved by the music to remember how much Galt had taken, or he would never have asked him a question calling for such a delicate balance of the feelings. But if he had forgotten, he remembered when Galt began to speak. The dull red went over his big neck and face, and veins came out on his temples.

Galt was not a man just then. He was an artist—an artist drunk. I have felt just the way he felt. He was in an entirely other atmosphere than the one Hardy and I were breathing. He was in a world of color tones and values, of lines and proportion and composition and of the poignant emotions that rise in the breast at the almost-perfection of beauty. He was in a world where there is neither marriage nor giving in marriage. And it was from the agony of his sensibilities that he spoke, oblivious of the human relations between his hearers and his subject.

As I look back on it now, there is no place where I could have interrupted him and saved him from the big hands that a moment later were at his throat.

"Hardy," he said, "I loved her first for the green and copper of her eyes and hair, for the long lines of her limbs—"

He paused, his eyes half closed, as though to catch the colors.

"—for the flowing curves of her half-bare neck."

Hardy blanched as if lashed in the face. He half arose from his chair. But I was fascinated, listening for what the fool would say next. I did not budge.

"And I stopped loving her," the drawling, drunken voice went on, "—stopped lovin' her—God, what a loss!—stopped lovin' her—"

He knocked his glass on the table in a sudden weak whiff of disgust.

"—because of that damnable scar on her knee."

FAITH

By Virginia A. Kitabjian

NASSER EDDIN HOJA, the philosopher, borrowed a copper boiler one day from an accommodating neighbor. At the end of the day, when he returned it, his own smaller copper boiler was inside.

"Effendim," said the neighbor, "what may this be inside?"

"Oh," returned Hoja, "she hatched a little one while in my kitchen."

The neighbor looked at the boilers and then at Hoja, rubbing his scraggly beard. However, he decided to place faith in the philosopher's saying.

Again the following week came Hoja to borrow the large boiler, which was handed to him with alacrity; but Hoja did not return it for some days.

The neighbor thought that surely a whole family must have hatched in the meanwhile, and so he called for his boiler at the end of the week. But Hoja received him with a doleful sigh.

"Oh, friend, you are too late; the boiler is dead," he mourned.

"Why," returned the neighbor, "how can a copper boiler die?"

"When you believe that it can hatch, why do you question its right to die?" asked Hoja, reproachfully closing the gate of his little yard.

The neighbor, walking home empty-handed, began to think. But he was thinking too late to save his copper boiler.



EARTH-BORN

By Odell Shepard

NO lapidary's heaven, no brazier's hell for me,
For I am made of dust and dew and stream and plant and tree:
I'm close akin to boulders, I'm cousin to the mud,
And all the winds of all the sky made music in my blood.

My veins run red with sunset, my body is white with rain,
Upon my heart auroral skies have left a scarlet stain,
My thoughts are green with spring time, among the meadow-rue
I think my very soul is growing green and gold and blue.

What will be left, I wonder, when Death has washed me clean
Of dust and dew and sundown and April's virgin green?
If there's enough to make a ghost I'll bring it back again
To walk beneath the elm trees along a winding lane.



WOMEN usually enjoy annoying their husbands, but not when they annoy them by growing fat.

HYPOTHETICALLY GOLF

A STORY OF GOLF, CHILDREN LOVE, AND A DUFFER.

By Richard Florance

NATURALLY enough you might expect to find a woman very fond of children, and a man enthusiastic about golf. There is no reason why a woman should not be fond of other things as well, of beer, for instance, or dancing, or Vanity Fair. By the same token, there is no reason why a man should not be enthusiastic about the modern chorus, or tennis, or sodas, or anything at all that pleases him. Only, please may I keep to golf?

Well, then, to repeat, a woman by rights ought to love children, and a man ought to like golf. But these two people didn't. The order was all tangled up, and it was Jimmy who adored children, and Margaret who played golf.

They didn't call each other Margaret and Jimmy at first. Paradoxically, they didn't meet until after they had had quite a conversation together. And although they were both staying at the same big country hotel, they hadn't even seen each other before that first conversation.

Jimmy was a healthy young chap with a tremendous lot of money and a big estate somewhere or other in the correct place for big estates to be, but he loved the hotel because there were always so many people all about. Not that he ever met them, but he liked to be near people, and to watch them. If they tried to be nice to him, at once he became shy, and as soon as their backs were turned he ran ingloriously away. The children, however, he met quite informally, and romped with them in the woods behind the hotel, or took

them for sudden picnics and told them wonderful stories. He was so big and good looking that the mothers gladly gave him their youngest sons and daughters, and sighed because he never asked for their older daughters. The older daughters just wrinkled up their noses, after the fashion of the unsought.

Margaret looked as though she were originally made to be the dream mother of all children, except for her eyes. It was her eyes that made children intuitively suspicious of her. They were beautiful blue eyes, but they were restless, eager eyes, as are those of one who drives her own car, of one who can be sure of her dresses, her maid, her allowance and her name, but who can never be sure of her long brassie shots. "Children?" she is quoted as saying. "Oh, yes. Wretched little things. They never keep their eyes on the ball. They just carry my clubs around and act perfectly useless."

Margaret came to the hotel for its private links. Jimmy came for the children and the theory of sociableness. So at the end of their fourth day in the same place, neither one had as much as noticed the other one.

The fifth day they met, as might two stars rushing together meet and roar into flame. Jimmy and a horde of youngsters had invaded the golf links. That was wrong in the first place, but Jimmy knew no golf, and the links to him were not sacred, but interesting meadows wherein folk walked, hitting little balls about with long sticks. And so when a ball bounded near him, and

when one of the children, picking it up, started a game of catch, he was only mildly critical of the propriety of so doing.

Presently from a gully came striding Margaret, followed by a mite in a very, very large pair of overalls, who dragged after him her golf bag. She looked at the ground before her and frowned. Then she turned to the caddy beside her, but he stared vacantly back at her. There was evidently no ball there. She opened her mouth and gave tongue to the accepted formula.

"You silly little idiot," she said calmly, "are you going to stand there with your mouth open?" And then, as no answer came, and as the mouth did not shut, she went on with heat, "You're a rotten caddy! Why didn't you watch it? What good are you? You little fool, I could *carry* my clubs myself! Here!" Whereupon she seized the unfortunate mite, tore from his grasp the bag of clubs, threw them on the ground, threw her own club after them, and stamped her foot. The mite smiled weakly, and burst into tears.

Jimmie's children had watched this scene in awed silence. The ball dropped from a limp hand, and fell at Jimmie's feet. He picked it up and advanced sternly on the woman.

"Here," he said warmly, "is your old ball, and I'd advise you to be a little less excitable and rude."

Seemingly aware of him and his group for the first time, she took the ball from his hand and threw it down. Rage and coherence struggled in her. She bent and picked up a long wooden club; she turned on Jimmy and her eyes shot fire.

"You mind your own business, sir!" she said. Which is quite like a famous verse, isn't it? Only Margaret was very angry indeed. "Suppose you attend to your own business, and take those dirty little creatures off the golf course. This is not a nursery!"

At first the "mind your own business" struck Jimmy as being quite undignified, and he smiled. But her final sentence, delivered icily, was crushing in

the intensity of its scorn. He stared at her, and she stared back at him.

He missed a breath, and to make up for it took a deep, audible one the next time. She missed one, too, and to make up for it she missed another. He found himself wandering helplessly along the curved line of her mouth; over, around, and back, over, around, and back; he had been wandering so for centuries. As for Margaret, she had slipped down into the very deepest part of his eyes, and was beginning to drown. Desperately she turned her back on him and began to swing before the ball. With a start he noticed how lithe she was. Her club swung up, hesitated the fraction of a second, and then dipped, and the ball fled away in a long arc, to land far down the course, rolling straight. "Thank God!" thought Margaret, and wanted terribly to look at Jimmy. How was he to know that it was the Lord and not the woman who made that shot? Again he breathed long and audibly, and without a parting glance she was gone, to lose more balls that day than ever before.

That night Jimmy forsook his usual quiet corner on the verandah, where Margaret had never come, and walked with a brave pretence of unconcern among the guests star-scattered in the card room. And Margaret, forsaking her maiden aunt in the card room where Jimmy never came, walked casually around the verandah. Therefore that night they did not meet.

Next morning Jimmy stealthily evaded his children, and fled into the woods. He walked in an elaborate circle, and when he at last came to a clearing he went forward with the greatest of caution. Finally he stopped and sat down, his back against an old tree. Before him stretched the golf links and beyond them the hotel. He lit his pipe and settled himself comfortably.

Before him passed golfers in various stages of satisfaction or despair, and at last, followed by the mite, the one he waited to see. She made a short approach to the green, and holed out in two careful puts. She was adorably in-

cisive, thought Jimmy. She teed up and drove a long, low ball that sliced into the rough, whereat she stamped her foot. To her incisiveness he added a beautiful figure, and a terrible temper. Then he got up and went home, talking wisely to the birds in general, and to one old, bored-looking toad in particular.

After lunch he called to him his clan, much to the delight of mothers and nurses, and settled himself for an afternoon of stories. Deep in the woods he sat with the clan spread before him fanwise, and he told them grisly stories of murders and ghosts and tigers and cannibals, to their thrilled horror. There was one about a Prince and a Princess that was the best of all because it was so possible.

"You see," he said to the devoted circle, "the Prince had never seen the Princess before, so, of course, when she suddenly came over a hill, followed by a beautiful big tiger, he sat right down and stared at her. She had a little bunch of sticks with her that the tiger carried, and with these she kept hitting at a tiny white dog that was all rolled up in a ball and rolled along in front of her. Now when she saw the Prince she couldn't help but sit right down and stare at him, too, so the tiger, thinking that the game was over, opened his mouth, wiggled his tail, and swallowed the little white dog right up. Then the Princess got awfully angry, and stamped her foot, and said to the tiger—well, she was very angry indeed, and I mustn't tell you what she said."

At once he heard behind him a low trill of laughter, quickly smothered. He regarded a tree in front of him gravely, with an air of detachment. Then he slowly got up, and the clan chorused their regrets.

"Go on—don't stop. Please, please go on!"

He looked at the eager, upturned faces with some quiet dignity. "Let's go home," he said.

Night found Jimmy in a dark corner of the verandah where no one would object to his pipe. Margaret and her

maiden aunt joined a group inside, and sat down to bridge. An hour later, Margaret gave her place to an elderly lady, yawned very delicately, and said good night. On the verandah at that moment, Jimmy stuffed his pipe into his pocket, and untangled his feet from a neighboring rocking chair.

"Guess I'll get a whiff of air," thought Margaret, inside.

"Hi, ho, might as well turn in," murmured Jimmy, outside.

And so it came to pass that as Margaret stepped out through the doorway and stopped a moment to consider, Jimmy swung in from the night and passed her. For the briefest of seconds they looked into each other's eyes.

The man had rather imagined that when they met he would smile slightly in a superior way, and look tremendous. The woman had fancied her face assuming the most innocent look, a trifle interrogatory, perhaps, with a hint of suppressed laughter.

The very suddenness found them off their guards. Red flamed into their faces and in their startled eyes was confusion akin to terror. Jimmy felt as though he had suddenly, in the dark, run full tilt upon a wall.

Then it was over, and she was running swiftly down a cool, dim path, her hands to her face, while he fled miserably to his room.

Quoth a robin to a worm early next morning, before the orthodox world had eaten its breakfast, "Just look at that man. Hoho!" The unfortunate worm twisted about to get a better view, and beheld a man who whacked madly at a little white ball, but seemingly in vain, for the ball did not move. "Why, it's Jimmy!" cried the worm, and at once the robin ate him. Part of the orthodox world had breakfasted.

Jimmy it was, a wrathful, despairing Jimmy. Secretly he had tiptoed out into the early morning with a borrowed bag of clubs; golf he would learn, and soon. He had started well. He had addressed the ball according to the best pictures, and his first shot, a nonchalant expression of confidence, had been in

the nature of a success. Then he had flubbed mildly, sending the ball rolling a few yards ahead of him. Warned by that of carelessness, he had set himself to the task, nerves and muscles tensed, with the result that he had missed the ball twice, and had plowed a deep furrow into the ground. That was an hour and four holes ago. He shook his head, and ran his hand through his stubbly hair. He changed his club, and bent over the ball again. Far behind him he heard a faint "fore!" Like the shyest of birds when alarmed, he fled.

Later, from the screen of the woods, he decided that golf was a snare and a delusion. Nay, more: it was a proven impossibility to hit a ball of that size so far. Those eerie creatures who did it were a sort of goblins, possessed of inherited and unnatural powers. For him to try were mere foolishness.

So it was with mild surprise, coupled with vexation, that he found himself that afternoon approaching the bunker at number three hole with sudden, wandering little strokes. He had been careful to let no one see him play, and when a foursome moved on to a green near where his ball was lying on its way to another hole, rather than play himself he watched their putting with elaborate interest. When they quoted their best score for the hole as five, he smiled. It was manifestly impossible to do that hole in five. He himself had just taken twenty-seven strokes on the same hole; that is, not counting five misses, and a long time spent in a gully. Wherefore, when they said that their best score was five he smiled. These polite conversations on the golf links were quite pleasant affairs. Not to be outdone, he explained to them easily how he had just made the hole in four. Then he politely waited for them to drive through him, for, as he remarked, a foursome is always more important than a single player. As his ball lay some two hundred yards from the tee, which he casually remarked to be his drive, although it was the consummation of seven strokes and a miss, the

party went through him with great respect for his prowess and his old-fashioned politeness.

Later, when he finally sputtered into the bottom of a very sandy bunker, he was careful to peep over the top of it before he started thrashing at the sand. It was well that he did, for on the other side was that which caused him to hold tightly to the tufts of grass along the slope of the bunker and flatten himself out. Below him sat Margaret, deep in conversation with the youngest, the dirtiest, and the most terrible of the clan.

Jimmy regarded her with delight. Plainly out of her element, she was struggling bravely to win the youngster's interest. It was clear that she was having a most unenjoyable time, and it was equally clear that her small companion was bored. She was asking him questions about his home life.

"And of course, you love your dear old grandmother very much," announced Margaret with the least upward inflection of her voice. The child frowned and hit his shoe with his hand.

"Why don't you play wiv me instead of askin' me silly old questions?" he grumbled. Soon he would scramble to his feet and run away. Margaret considered desperately.

Jimmy grinned. Then, as his roving eye caught sight of the green some hundred yards below, his grin widened. He slid back into the sand of the bunker and picked up his ball. He stood so that he could just see the top of the flag at the hole. Then he growled loudly in a deep voice.

"Well, well, here I am right at the edge!"

There was an exclamation from the other side of the bunker, and the sound of a child scampering away. Loudly he cried "fore!" and with that threw the ball high in the air toward the flag.

A moment later when he came from around the end of the bunker, whistling blithely, his ball lay on the green miraculously near the cup, and Margaret, sitting alone, was regarding him with wide, awed eyes.

Always after supper the children marched through the halls in the wake of their respective nurses, bound for bed, a rebellious, captive procession. So there is nothing out of the ordinary in Margaret's happening to meet that night the particular child of the afternoon, nor in her stopping for a moment to say good night to him. Perhaps there is a bit more coincidence in the opportune arrival of Jimmy from around a corner, and in the fact that he, too, had to stop and bid the child good night.

"This," said the small but correct mutual friend, "is the golf lady. And this is my story papa."

Gravely the two nodded, smiled, and then laughed. An omniscient nurse dragged the protesting introducer off to bed, and Jimmy and Margaret were left alone with one another. Apparently they had never seen each other before.

"He's the dearest mite," said Margaret.

"Appreciative little beggar," said Jimmy, and then, suddenly bethinking himself of the view from the top of the bunker, and Margaret struggling to make conversation with that same appreciative creature, laughed gleefully. Margaret laughed, too, but uneasily. She had thought of the bunker herself.

They wandered out onto the verandah and sat down in low rocking chairs. They had progressed from the particular to the general, subject: children.

"Do you know," said Margaret, "I've never been at a hotel where there were so many children. They bob up all over, wherever you least expect them. You bump into them in the halls, on the lake, you fall into them on the stairs, the walks, the golf links. . . ."

She was silent. He echoed her weakly, "Ah, yes—the golf links." And he was silent. Again they were thinking of the same incident. And then together they remarked:

"I love them, though."

"Rather a nuisance on the links."

Lo, it was Jimmy who said that they were a nuisance on the links. They

heard each other and at once reversed their periods. Again they spoke together.

Said Margaret, "Yes—a bit of a nuisance."

Said Jimmy, "Jolly little beggars!"

Then, feeling hopelessly entangled, they lapsed into gloomy silence. When the measured creak of the rocking chairs threatened to unseat her reason, Margaret spoke again, and with a brilliant stroke carried the attack into her opponent's territory.

"I understand," she said, "that you play a very fine game of golf."

Jimmy moved in his seat. "Yes?" he murmured, correctly. She went on.

"You know, I play at it myself. Of course, I'm not in your class, but I'd love to play with you sometime—if you wouldn't mind playing with a mere amateur."

"Love to," murmured Jimmy, and moved again in his seat.

The lady pouted. He hardly need be so proud of his game and so standoffish. Jimmy sensed a dangerous gap somewhere, and sent reinforcements.

"Love to," he murmured again, weakly.

It was decidedly cool of him, but then Margaret supposed that a really fine golfer couldn't be expected to go into ecstasies at the idea of playing with an amateur lady. She had seen that one approach of his from the bunker.

"How would you like to play tomorrow morning?" she asked, a bit timidly.

Jimmy stopped rocking. "To-morrow," he said. "To-morrow morning. Oh, yes. Um. I'll tell you—I'd like to tremendously, but you see—you see, I've got to go on a picnic with the children." He smiled at himself in a pleased way. Picnics were easy affairs to arrange. He blessed the children.

To every man there must come at least once in this life some moment of brilliant strategic inspiration. Such a moment was Jimmie's, and he swept the enemy off the earth.

"Why," said he enthusiastically, "don't you come along?"

Margaret gasped. Again she saw herself, a bunker, and one child. Then she thought dimly of herself as a Raphael Madonna, surrounded by cherubs, and then Raphael changed to Rose O'Neil and the cherubs changed to kewpies and made faces at her. She shuddered.

"I'm awfully sorry," she explained, "I'd adore to, of course, but you see—you see, I've promised to meet Dick on the links at ten, and so—of course—you see . . ."

The retreat, although conducted in poor order, was effective. Jimmy wondered who Dick was, and frowned. Dick was Margaret's unfortunate, small, thin caddy. But how should Jimmy know that?

Next day he discovered the gentleman. Strange, how content and at peace he felt when he gazed for the first time at Dick's diminutive form and Dick's very, very large overalls.

Foreseeing difficulties, Jimmy wisely gave a hypothetical bag of clubs to the golf master and asked him quite hypothetically to reshaft his driver and his mashie. For this he paid him a real price, and had thereby a two days' excuse from golf. Then he took Dick aside, and to that minute creature he tendered a large bribe. Bigger men than Dick have fallen before smaller bribes; he will be judged in heaven. Thereafter Miss Margaret's drives, Miss Margaret's puts, Miss Margaret's scores were as nothing compared to Mr. Jimmie's, and compared they were at every opportunity. When, upon an occasion, she drove the longest ball of her career, Dick even went so far as to point out the exact spot where Mr. Jimmie's drive had lain only a short week ago—some ten yards further on.

It is not to be supposed that Margaret enjoyed this. Indeed, more than once she stamped her foot at Dick and bade him be still. Once she boxed his ears. But he hated her cordially and continued to expatiate on Jimmie's superior game. Nor would she change her caddy. Somehow there was an element of sweetness in her cup of bitter-

ness, a sweetness, however, that she never would have admitted.

Jimmy noticed a growing coldness in Margaret, but he accepted it bravely, so bravely as to almost lead one to suspect that he rather liked it. Certainly it was not the coldness of boredom that the lady felt for him. He had daily reports from his small henchman, and he came from such councils in a highly amiable frame of mind. He managed to break his brassie early one morning before anyone else was up, and that kept him out of the game for another day, particularly as he could never play with any clubs but his own, and his brassie was his favorite shot. Margaret, seeing again that long mashie approach over the bunker, thrilled with despair.

For all of what must pass for her coldness, they were often together. For who shall delve into the heart of a golfer, and that one a woman? We can but watch the elaborately innocent ways in which they used to meet each other, the long walks they used to take together, the unaccountable silences that they both loved and feared, and finally the great hatred that flamed through the woman every time that Dick assured her that her drive was a little bit shorter—just a little bit shorter. Is it not consistent?

They met each other with smiles, and used to hide together from the pursuing children. Sometimes they raced around hand in hand, or walked together down the dark walks and paths at night. He used to take her arm, and whip her face with soft sprays of flowers. It almost seemed as though she had forgotten those long brassie shots of his, sometimes, and when one night she took his arm in such a sweet, womanly way, and walked with him for a long while in the most blissful of silences, he was so moved that later, when he went to bed, he sat for half an hour with his foot in his hand, before he could properly concentrate on the way to take off a shoe.

Therefore the blow was all the more shattering and unexpected when it fell.

The next morning, when he had carefully timed his entry into the dining room so that he could pass her table and smile a good morning at her, his smile stiffened and froze, and his heart fluttered and dropped through seventy miles of vacuum. For there, at Margaret's table, sat a strange, attractive man, who bore no more resemblance to the lady than does, for instance, a golf ball in a daisy field resemble a golf ball.

After the most miserable of breakfasts, Jimmy went out onto the verandah and sat stiffly in the most uncomfortable-looking chair he could find. Two children passed him, talking in the loud whisper of their kind. "Poor story papa," said one, "his girl got another feller." Through the trees that screened the links from the hotel, Jimmy caught a glimpse of two figures swinging along the fair towards the first hole, and one of them was surely Margaret. Jimmy cursed the children.

Nor did he see much more of Margaret in the days following. She seemed to spend most of her time with the new chap. For the most part they were on the golf links together, but there Jimmy never saw them, for he buried himself in the woods, and even forgot that a hypothetical bag of clubs was still being repaired.

Therein Jimmy was human, but unwise. For if he had been inhuman and had peeked from out the woods at the two golfers, he would have seen a strange thing. Between them there was only one bag, and the stranger was making frantic swats at the ball and hitting it not at all. And beside him stood Margaret, adjuring, coaxing, commanding, blasting with scorn and wheedling with praise. In this Jimmy would have been vastly delighted, but considerably puzzled. Unless he had thought perhaps: She must love him a lot to do all that for him. Then he would have packed up and gone home. So maybe it's as well that Jimmy stayed human, and sulked in the woods.

Of course he met the stranger, and was miserably aware that he couldn't help liking him. He liked everything

about him—his bigness, his blondness, his awkwardness. But he refused to go picnicking with them, refused to go walking or swimming or paddling with them, and, indeed, refused to do anything with them. Again, being human, he never saw the triumph in Margaret's eyes, nor the frank amusement in the man's. If he had, he wouldn't have understood it, anyhow. He moped miserably by himself.

It was while he was so moping that Margaret and her friend held a little conversation that was to plunge poor Jimmy into the deepest depths that ever man had plumbed. The two were coming in from golf, and the path was deserted. He bent toward her, and spoke in a low, doubtful voice.

"Dear," he said, "how do you know that he'll accept?"

"Don't worry, Hugh, he'll accept. He can't just refuse. It was different with me, you know—I couldn't really ask him." She broke into a low laugh. "He'll be so upset! I wonder if he has a sense of humor."

The big man laughed, but a bit doubtfully. She slipped her hand into his, and they walked silently to the hotel. Jimmy, on the verandah, saw them, and bit his lip.

Therefore he was in no mood to answer Dennison when the latter came up to him later. It seemed to make no difference to the elect of Margaret, however, for he sat down next to him and lit a cigar. There was a silence. Dennison puffed away at his cigar and then plunged in.

"I say, old man—I've been hearing interesting things about you."

"Yes?"

"I—ah—they say that you're a pretty fine golfer."

"Yes?"

"I wonder if you would do me the honor of playing with me sometime."

Trapped! Jimmy crossed and uncrossed his legs, and squirmed.

"Why—I—well, now, you see . . ."

But Dennison couldn't see. Jimmy had no real reason for refusing him, and at the end of a desperate but futile

ten minutes Jimmy, for all his wriggles and his squirms, was firmly impaled on the spike of his own misdeeds, to be offered up next morning as a sacrifice to the mob. No one knew what a Roman Holiday was preparing except Jimmy, but the exclusiveness of the knowledge was no balm.

Margaret went to bed that night dreaming of the morrow, seeing in her mind the proud Jimmy fuming along with the duffer Dennison, held up for hours at every hole, forced into so ridiculous a match that his vanity would suffer until the end of time. And then—but whisper it not in Gath—duffers have been known to beat veterans—sometimes—maybe.

Jimmy did not sleep. His reign was over. To-morrow he was to be held up to scorn by Margaret's lover. Even his children would laugh at him. And Margaret . . . he turned his face miserably to the wall. One more day he would stay at that wretched hotel, and then he'd leave. And when he left, he'd leave womankind behind him, too.

Toward morning he grew defiant and swore that after all he'd put up a game fight. With that he fell asleep, and when he woke up it was late, and he wasted precious minutes trying to realize that this sunny day was the morning of his tragedy. When he came downstairs, appropriately tragic, it was too late for breakfast.

Rumors of the match had gone the rounds of the hotel, and there was a big crowd at the first tee when Jimmy got to the golf house. He went quietly into the house and cornered the golf master. From him he borrowed a bag of clubs. The golf master was all grin. "Cheshire cat!" thought Jimmy, and walked out to the tee.

Dennison was there, swinging professionally at the ground. Near him stood Margaret, smiling encouragement. When Jimmy came out she started toward him, but he turned away with bowed head. Dalila, Dalila!

The crowd fell back, for all the world, he thought, as though to give them air. He looked at Dennison, and

essayed a meager smile. It seemed to him just like one of the old street fights of his infancy, when he used to circle about within a narrow wall of faces, with clenched fists and snarling face. The same curious crowd, the same ferocious will to see something beaten, the same seemingness of unreality, and the same sinking feeling in the pit of his stomach. He swung his driver nervously, and waited for something to happen.

Dennison drove off first. He popped a little fly off to the right, and the crowd breathed. Dennison laughed, but Margaret frowned and shook her head at him. Jimmy compressed his lips and walked onto the tee. There was a dead silence. He stooped and arranged a tidy pile of sand for himself. Gingerly he placed the ball on this pile, and stepped back. He swung his club above the ball for a moment, and then drew it up over his shoulder. He closed his eyes, took a deep breath, and swooped upon it. There was a sharp crack and a gasp from the crowd. He opened his eyes. His ball was just dipping to earth far down the course, a beautiful long drive. Dennison whistled cheerfully, but Jimmy, when he started after his ball, could hardly walk for the trembling of his legs.

Dennison continued to pop little flies until he was opposite Jimmy. Then he managed to clear the intervening bunker, and landed on the green. Jimmy, closing his eyes again, flubbed into the sand and hacked furiously to get out. At the end of ten strokes he landed exhausted on the green, and lost the hole in five wild puts. The crowd was puzzled, but Margaret's eyes were wide and amazed. She had been watching Jimmie's face that second shot.

The second hole Dennison drove a short ball, but fairly straight. The crowd smiled at Dennison—they understood him now, and pitied him, and watched for Jimmie's long drive. Jimmy, with set jaw swooping upon the ball, missed it altogether. He opened his eyes and swung again. This time he hit the earth an inch in front

of the ball. The crowd tittered. Margaret was biting her lip to keep from shrieking, but Jimmy didn't care. He saw red; with all his might he came down on the ball, and the ball, plus a great deal of earth, flew off some five yards and stopped. Wild with rage, he followed it, dealing it mortal blows.

Dennison, immersed in the perilous intricacies of his own game, had no time to notice his rival. He only knew that as each hole reached up and drew down his ball, he had somehow miraculously won it from the champion. But Margaret understood, and she could have cried. If ever a woman was really sorry for something, that woman was Margaret. Only it was too late for remorse. The crowd had never enjoyed itself so hugely. The people followed the game as the bucolic nymphs might have followed Bacchus. They clutched each other in their transports of mirth, they fell over on their sides, drunk with laughter. The older daughters had the best time. . . . The sun beat down on Jimmy, the mockery and the laughter swept around him, and before him the terrible white ball kept creeping and flying and whirling in every direction. Into every bunker he slid, into every grass tuft he flubbed and he threshed and flailed and cursed in his heart.

Finally at the fifth hole human nature would stand no more. When for the fifth consecutive time he had missed the ball entirely, it was too much. Behind him howled the mob, and somewhere there was Margaret, but it all was nothing. He seized his clubs from the convulsed caddy, and threw them on the ground, he threw his hat on top of them, and with both feet he jumped upon hat and clubs. And then, with long strides, he fled away into the woods.

There his children found him calmly chewing a straw. Rage had given way to shame. He felt no anger at Margaret, nor at Dennison. He blamed himself, and mortification overwhelmed him. He thought that he would never be able to go back to the hotel again,

and yet he knew that ultimately he would have to. He welcomed the children with open arms, they were his friends. They, in turn, felt sorry for him, and nestled up to him while he stroked their hair and told them stories. There was one story about a Princess and a Prince who wasn't a Prince at all, but who masqueraded as one because he loved the Princess so much.

"And so," he wound up, "the poor little chap was sent to prison to be whipped because he had dared to love the Princess and to masquerade as a Prince. And for some reason or other everybody was pleased."

"I think," cried one of the clan, "that was mean of everybody!"

"And so do I!" cried a clear voice from the woods, and Margaret was with them. "Children," she said, "your mothers are all looking for you." Jimmy had an overpowering desire to kiss the hem of her skirt. Finding it a considerable business to breathe noiselessly, he kicked his foot vigorously in the moss.

When the children were gone she sat down beside him. He could say nothing, and she watched him, a little smile on her face. At last she broke silence.

"Jimmy," she said, "why did you?"

Then he told her. All the floodgates of the days were swept away, and he told her that he loved her—told her that he couldn't help it if she were married a thousand times—that he loved her—that he loved her. It was a tremendously dramatic moment, but there was a smile in her eyes. It worried him, for by rights it should not have been there.

"Jimmy—goose!" She laid a slim, cool hand on his arm. "Jimmy—you goose . . . you dear, dear goose!" And there was a little sob in her voice, although her eyes were smiling.

Whereupon the angels descended upon Jimmy in a torrent of pink fire and brass bands and glorious little fat cherubim.

Then she explained. Dennison was her cousin, and her accomplice. How he would love that man!

"Dearest," cried Jimmy, inspired, thinking of his old estate with its many acres of stubble, "you are going to have a golf links all your own. And I'm going to learn to play. A golf links? A thousand golf links!"

"Oh!" said Margaret to the woods.

From far off came to them the pealing laughter of the clan. And then her arms stole up around Jimmie's neck, and her face grew pink and white, and she whispered to him what *he* would have.

"Gee!" said Jimmy to the angels.



TO TWILIGHT

By George Sterling

LINGER, we pray,
Shy mother of the white and earliest star!
For in thy keeping are
The Dreams that suffer not the light of day—
Dim presences, that find us from afar.

O soundless feet,
Between the night and sunset hesitant!
The cricket's eager chant
And voice of some faint bell, remotely sweet,
Alone await thee, clear and consonant.

Sing to thyself
A song as pure, as low, as delicate,
Ere music seem too late,
Or yet the moonray seek the hidden elf,
Or mute, the night fall uncompassionate.

We shall not hear;
But in the heart an echo swiftly flown
Shall touch us from thine own,
And voices of the past, forlorn and clear,
Shall haunt us from the days that love hath known

So hast thou come,
Whose benediction ceases not for night,
To close the gates of light,
And tell, from fields for thee a moment dumb,
The age-old pain of Beauty and her flight.



FLAPPER LOVE

By Edna A. Collamore

SHE felt like a tragedy queen, but it is almost impossible to resemble one when wearing a smart pink linen frock, she looked like a very pretty girl in a deuce of a temper. As she went upstairs her high heels came down with emphasis on every step, and when she reached her own room she closed the door with such decision that the report was audible in the distant kitchen. Then she sat down by her writing-desk, and re-read the cause of the emotional crisis.

"Dear Florence" (said the note), "I know I haven't written for some time, but I've been awfully busy. My sisters had company from the West, they wanted me to help entertain, and then you know I'm getting ready for the golf tournament. I've been thinking for some time that there wasn't any need of our writing so often. To be quite honest our engagement doesn't seem very much of a success. I'm afraid we were too hasty about it."

"At first I thought I'd say nothing and let things drift, but if you don't mind it might be better to call it off, and be done with it. Of course I shall always be your friend and all that, but I'll think you will agree that the other was a mistake. Let me hear from you soon, what you think about it."

"Yours sincerely, "Edgar Allen."

Standing the letter on the desk before her where its phrasing could be easily referred to, Florence took a sheet of paper, dipped her pen into the ink, and began. "Dearest Edgar."

But this salutation, being a thing of habit, had been traced automatically, as it were, by the facile pen. So, with an exclamation of impatience, she tore up the paper and began again.

"Dear Mr. Allen: I don't see how you can face yourself in the glass, after sending me such a letter. Anybody but a perfect cad would have come himself, if he had anything like that to say. Perhaps you thought if you came over you'd meet my father or my brother, and I don't know as I blame you for not daring to."

"You had to tease me a long time before I'd say that I'd be engaged, and now for you to back out like this is too mean for words. I loathe you and despise you too much to ever want to see you or hear from you again. Florence."

With a nod of satisfaction she laid down her pen, and then proceeded to examine the hasty creation at her critical leisure. The second reading made her frown, shake her head, and finally tear the paper into fragments and throw it into the basket.

As she reached into the drawer after another sheet of paper, her hand touched a box of chocolates. She opened the box, took out a sweet and bit it cautiously. It was of an expensive variety, and the contents were likely as not rather weird. This was apparently filled with nuts, cheese, and tabasco. She ate it meditatively.

This time she wrote with slow deliberation:

"Dearest Edgar: For I still call you this, knowing it is for the last time. Of course, I am ready to free you if you desire it, even if it breaks my heart. But how little I fancied when you taught me to love you, promising that your love would endure forever, that so soon the bright dream would be over."

"Forgive me, I do not mean to reproach you, but a woman's heart should

not be treated so lightly. It hurts, Edgar, my eyes fill with tears as I write, yet still I hope that you may be happy, that no one will ever cause you such suffering as you have caused

"Your broken-hearted Florence."

Real tears actually did brim her eyes, and one fell on her signature. With pleased artistic fervor she watched the ink blur while she regaled herself with a chocolate. This time it was a drippy one, necessitating much wiping of the fingers.

But this second note, upon reading and re-reading, seemed less satisfactory. "Slush!" said Florence distastefully, and tore it up.

"Dear Edgar" (she began again): "I think you have the right idea about our engagement. It was surely a mistake on my part. I thought so, really, some weeks ago, but I hesitated to tell you, because you had professed your affection so often that I feared you might have meant a little of it, and I didn't want to hurt your feelings. As long as you had no such compunctions, of course you could settle the thing more easily.

"Good luck to you in your next affair of the heart. I have a fancy it is, or will be, with some girl from out of town, who hasn't known you very long.

"Yours, Florence."

Before she had a chance to peruse this production for the second time, a tap at the door was followed by the entrance of a cute little thing in white corduroy, one Sally Hemenway, Florence's own particular chum.

"What you doing?" asked Sally.

"Read this," said Florence significantly, extending the letter of the faithless Edgar.

"M-m-m," said Sally, as she read. "You don't give a care, do you? You were going to get rid of him anyway?"

"I was waiting to see if his father was going to give him a new car," admitted Florence.

"He had a nerve," commented Sally.

"I suppose it's that Reeves girl visiting there. He's crazy about her."

"She's welcome to him," Florence remarked, "only I do like to end my affairs myself."

"I should say so," said Sally. "We'll see that Edgar gets his. That your answer, honey? Pass it over, will you?"

She read it briskly and returned it.

"What do you think of it?" asked Florence. "Is it all right?"

"M-m-m," hesitated Sally. "It sounds a wee bit catty. The Reeves girl might think you were jealous."

"He wouldn't show it to her," said Florence.

"Wouldn't he?" asked Sally, quite without emphasis.

Florence tore the note across. It went to join its predecessors in the scrap basket. "I shan't write at all," she announced.

"Seems to me I would," objected Sally, "it makes a neater ending, shows you don't care. But you can't spend much time over it, because my aunt's car is at the door, waiting to take us to her new country house for the weekend. She sent the car up on purpose for us. Isn't she a dear?"

"Isn't she!" echoed Florence enthusiastically. "Can't you hunt up a postcard in the desk somewhere while I hurry a few things together?"

"Here's one of the golf links," Sally announced, as she rummaged in the desk. Her speech was somewhat impeded, owing to the discovery of the chocolates.

"We've played there so much, he may think I'm sentimental about it," said Florence. "See if you can't find something else. Would you take the yellow chiffon?"

"No, the pale green crêpe de Chine," decreed Sally. "You look awfully sweet in that, and aunt is sure to have loads of nice men around. Here's one of the new library building."

"That will do. There's nothing too personal about that," said Florence. She took the card and wrote hastily:

"Yours received. All right. F. L. G."

The adequate reply was written.

THE INCOMPARABLE PHYSICIAN

By William Fink

THE eminent physician, Yen Li-Shen, being called in the middle of the night to the bedside of the rich tax-gatherer, Chu Yi-Foy, found his distinguished patient suffering from a spasm of the liver. An examination of the pulse, tongue, toe-nails, and hair-roots revealing the fact that the malady was caused by the presence of a multitude of small worms in the blood, the learned doctor forthwith dispatched his servant to his surgery for a vial of gnats' eyes dissolved in the saliva of men executed by strangling, that being the remedy advised by Li Tan-Kien and other high authorities for the relief of this painful and dangerous condition.

When the servant returned the patient was so far gone that Cheyne-Stokes breathing had already set in, and so the doctor decided to administer the whole contents of the vial—an heroic dose, truly, for it has been immemorially held that even so little as the amount that will cling to the end of a horse hair is sufficient to cure. Alas, in his professional zeal and excitement, the celebrated doctor permitted his hand to shake like a myrtle leaf in a Spring gale, and so he dropped not only the contents of the vial but also the vial itself down the aesophagus of his moribund patient.

The accident, however, did not impede the powerful effects of this famous remedy. In ten minutes Chu Yi-Foy was so far recovered that he asked for a plate of rice stewed with plums, and by morning he was able to leave his bed and receive the reports of his spies, informers and extortioners. That day he sent for Dr. Yen and in token of his gratitude, for he was a just and righteous man, settled upon him in due form

of law, and upon his heirs and assigns in perpetuity, the whole rents, rates, imposts and taxes, amounting to no less than ten thousand Hangkow taels a year, of two of the streets occupied by money-changers, bird-cage makers and public women in the town of Szu-Loon, and of the related alleys, courts and lanes. And Dr. Yen, with his old age and the old age of his seven sons and thirty-one grandsons now safely provided for, retired from the practise of his art, and devoted himself to a tedious scientific inquiry (long the object of his passionate aspiration) into the precise physiological relation between gravel in the lower lobe of the heart and the bursting of arteries in the arms and legs.

So passed many years, while Dr. Yen pursued his researches and sent his annual reports of progress to the Academy of Medicine at Shan-Si, and Chu Yi-Foy increased his riches and his influence, so that his arm reached out from the mountains to the sea. One day, in his eightieth year, Chu Yi-Foy fell ill again, and, having no confidence in any other physician, sent once more for the learned and now venerable Dr. Yen.

"I have a pain," he said, "in my left hip, where the stomach dips down over the spleen. A large knob has formed there. A lizard, perhaps, has got into me. Or perhaps a small hedge-hog."

Dr. Yen thereupon applied the test for lizards and hedge-hogs—to wit, the application of madder dye to the Adam's apple, turning it green if any sort of reptile is within, and refusing to stick if there is a mammal—but it failed to operate as the books describe. Being

thus led to suspect a misplaced and wild-growing bone, perhaps from the vertebral column, the doctor decided to have recourse to surgery, and so, after the proper propitiation of the gods, he administered to his eminent patient a draught of opium water, and having excluded the wailing women of the household from the sick chamber, he cut into the protuberance with a small, sharp knife, and soon had the mysterious object in his hand. . . . It was the vial of dissolved gnats' eyes—*still full and tightly corked*. Worse, it was *not* the vial of dissolved gnats' eyes, but a vial of common burdock tea—*the remedy for infants griped by their mothers' milk*. . . .

But when the eminent Chu Yi-Foy, emerging from his benign stupor, made a sign that he would gaze upon the cause of his distress, it was a bone that Dr. Yen Li-Shen showed him—an authentic bone, ovoid and evil-looking—

and lately the knee cap of one Ho Kwang, brass bangle maker in the street of Szchen-Kiang. Dr. Yen carried this bone in his girdle to keep off the black, blue and yellow plagues. Chu Yi-Foy, looking upon it, wept the soft, grateful tears of an old man.

"This is twice," he said, "that you, my learned friend, have saved my life. I have hitherto given you, in token of my gratitude, the rents, rates, imposts and taxes, of two streets, and of the related alleys, courts and lanes. I now give you the weight of that bone in diamonds, in rubies, in pearls or in emeralds, as you will. And whichever of the four you choose, I give you the other three also. For is it not said by K'ung Fu-tsze, 'The good physician bestows what the gods merely promise?'"

And Dr. Yen Li-Shen lowered his eyes and bowed. But he was too old in the healing art to blush.



THE excuse of a jealous woman is that she loves her husband. The excuse of her husband is that he doesn't love his wife.



WHAT alcohol is to men, tears are to women. In each there is sanctuary from the duel of sex.



PROVINCIALISM;—the belief that every man who understands French is a gay dog.



BACHELOR: one that all married women suspect and all married men envy.



THE WAY OF A MAN

By Maurice Samuel

AT their feet the slow-sliding, shallow waters drowsed. Broad leaves lay flat on the unruffled surface, and the long, rough rushes on the bank stood up and pointed their ends downwards. To their left was a bush of wild honeysuckle, hidden now in the confusion of shadows. The round moon that had come up with the going down of the sun was a haze of pearl just over the black, rustling trees that massed about the river bend.

On either side of the water the bank sloped upwards. By day about the rocks that bent their brown, slatey backs through the grass, rock pinks stood like midget bodyguards, and everywhere timid buttercups shrank into the bosom of the green. Here and there, when the sun was strong, the pansy stood up boldly, staring out with insolent eye, and when the grass was searched closely starry anemones were found, white-glimmering in the deepest shadows. But now they could only see each other's faces, pale in the mist-filtered light.

In the long pauses between their whispers they could hear the wind that shook the trees and bushes, or, beyond that, the deeper sound of the city, and at intervals the quick-born hum of an insect that flashed by in the dark. Sometimes, when they stirred but slightly, the crackling of dried twigs stood out suddenly, thin and clear-cut. But most they listened in wonder and fear to their own tremulous sighing.

His right arm was about her, and her right hand was in his left. The fingers of their clasped hands were restless: now they twined themselves together sinuously, now they were un-

twined, so that the whole of her little hand was enclosed in his grip. Now he forced the fingers of his hand in between the fingers of hers, and now he took his hand away for a moment to pass it lingeringly over her arm from wrist to shoulder.

They spoke in whispers, though they knew that no one could be near. It seemed unbecoming that even the most trivial endearment should carry further than across the brief space from the lips that spoke to the ear that listened. And they feared less that their words of little meaning would be heard than that the strange purport ever beyond, which they themselves could neither control nor understand, would be guessed and uttered harshly by an unknown listener.

A question of hers had hung suspended in his memory. For a long time she had waited patiently for an answer, then, when she saw that he had forgotten, she pressed his hand.

"Tell me, Bernard, isn't it so?"

He shook his head, half in sadness, half in amusement.

"These continuous self-questionings!" he whispered. "Why can you not leave well alone? Must you spoil a thing beautiful and complete in itself? Does beauty need justification? Then why should love?"

"But—oh—" and she lapsed into silence again. He saw her tighten her lips, as though in self-conquest. He spoke again, passionately.

"Suppose we have known each other only these four weeks? Do you know what I feel? I feel that if we had only met this morning, this evening you would have been in my arms. Oh, Ina! Is love a chemical experiment which

takes so long, or so long to complete itself?"

The look of fear, only half conquered, did not pass from her face. He spoke again.

"Is it not sufficient that I love you and that you—" He stopped and recommenced in a pained voice: "Complete love never has doubts and questionings. Only half-loves—"

"Bernard!"

The vehemence of her tone startled him. "Ina," he said, humbly, "I'm sorry. This unceasing analysis—it unshakes judgment, and belief. I did not mean to doubt you, Ina. Truly I did not."

"Bernard, you don't understand."

He did not question her for fear of offending some finer sense of hers, but soon she went on again.

"You did not hurt me just now by questioning my love. Why should that hurt me? You only hurt me by thinking that without loving you I could rest like this, in your arms. Does such a thing seem possible of me?"

"Ina, it was only an exclamation—a slip. I don't know why I said it. The thought was never in my mind."

"I know, Bernard. I'm not angry. Just for a moment I felt—but no!"

Despite her protestations there was a look on her face as of something half-said.

"Bernard," she continued, eagerly, "I want you to understand that with the first kiss I gave you, I gave you my all. I did not kiss you till I felt that the kiss carried myself with it."

"Ina," he said, holding her closer, "of course I understand. How could it have been otherwise with you?"

In the pause that followed she waited to hear it repeated of himself. He knew what she wanted him to say, and he struggled with himself. At last he had to break the pause.

"How could it be otherwise with anyone who really loves, and who loves wholly."

"Ah! Bernard, and I know that you love me really, and love me wholly," she said wistfully.

He feared that she might question him again, but suddenly she broke off anew.

"Yes, it is true: you can't measure love by standards or set it by circumstances. There is only one way to escape from the tyranny of things—forget them in love. I want to forget them, Bernard. Tell me—don't you?"

"I have forgotten them—as I always forget when I am with you, or when I think of you."

"And tell me, how do you think of me when I am not with you, and when and where?"

"Anywhere—any time. A little thing stirs me—nothing I can fix, then I forget where I am, and what I am about."

"But *what* do you think?"

"I really don't think. I just drowse in a memory of you, of your hair, and eyes, and lips, and hands. But sometimes I think we're walking together by the sea, or lying together in the forest—or—oh, foolish things, Ina."

She smothered his last words with a kiss. "Foolish things, Bernard?"

His hold about her tightened. "Well, then, not foolish things. Still—"

"Still?"

"Nothing."

A long silence came after. Now, it was she who was afraid to question. She watched his face steadily. His eyes were not on her, but half-closed. His lips were firm-set. Once or twice a flicker passed over his face, as though he were recalling something vividly. She watched him now with new and burning interest.

"Bernard—what?"

He seemed to awake; he held her closer still. "Nothing," he whispered, swiftly, "nothing—except that the perfume of your hair, and the smooth velvet of your hands, and the warm softness of your lips are dangerous things to play with—that to feel you resting against me—so—is terrible to bear—"

He stopped again. His wide-open eyes burned close to hers. She was afraid, yet she looked back. Her timidity and her daring challenged him. His arms closed tighter about her.

"That these things are terrible to bear," he repeated, "—do you understand, Ina?"

She felt his warm breath upon her face as she spoke. She no longer dared to look at him. She closed her eyes suddenly, and clung closer to him.

"Bernard!"

As they emerged from the shadow of the little glen, the blue-flickering, garish light of an electric lamp smote upon their faces. They stood awhile on the edge, he blinking at the light, she leaning against him, her eyes closed. He shivered.

"It's chilly, all of a sudden," he said, "isn't it?"

She made no answer. She hardly knew whether she was awake.

"Come, Ina, dear," he said briskly, "you can positively catch a cold here."

He took her arm firmly, and set off at a steady pace. She stumbled along by his side, silent. They were in the network of narrow-hedged lanes that led out into the main road. On either side of them the great, gaunt trees loomed through the shadow. She was afraid of them, and their whispering. Her own shadow, creeping up under her feet as she walked away from the lamp, startled her. Every hidden noise, every leaf that crackled under foot made her shrink in on herself. In the dark she could feel her cheeks burning.

Bernard was striding along carelessly. He began to hum to himself, and then burst into a cheery whistling. Once or twice, when they passed the dark places where the couples sat on benches she heard him chuckle to himself. And just before they emerged into the broad road that led into the city, he laughed aloud.

"Amusing, aren't they?" he said, referring to the last two they had just seen a little way back. Ina made no answer.

He stopped suddenly, and looked down at her.

"My dear," he said, banteringly, "whatever is the matter with you?" He looked a little closer and saw the two

tears that glistened on the rims of her eyes. He looked bewildered.

"Oh, Ina," he said, reproachfully, "what need is there of being upset?" He bent and kissed her. To her the kiss tasted cold and perfunctory. With difficulty she prevented herself from shrinking.

"And now, come, dear," he said, and took her arm again.

In a little while they were out on the broad main road. The houses were still scattered, but there was a rushing up and down of automobiles, a flashing of lights, a confusion of voices, foot-steps, faces. To her the noises and lights were intolerable. She could scarcely open her eyes. Her head throbbed, and every step she took jarred through her body. Bernard seemed to have forgotten her. When she looked up at him his head was well up, there was a smile of thoughtless happiness on his face, his eyes were darting from place to place. She looked away, weary and puzzled.

Then with an effort she looked round about her, and tried to fix her wandering wits on the place. The swiftness of the moving lights dazzled her at first, but soon she became accustomed to them, and she looked more closely in front of her, if only to distract her attention from the strange, cold heaviness within. The faces beat up against her in a swift, white stream. Pale they all seemed, but gay and instinct with a mocking laughter. Mostly the men and women were in couples, but here and there were two or three young fellows, two or three girls, still unmatched.

Suddenly she started. She had seen, two or three yards from her, the faces of two girl friends. A fear that they had seen her, that they would stop her, and speak to her, made her look down that she might not see them. She did not want to stop then, to have to laugh and jest and talk trivialities. She wanted to be alone. She took the next two or three steps in trembling hesitation, dreading to hear every moment a loud, cheerful laugh and a greeting. But either they had not seen her, or they

took her averted gaze for a snub. Ina did not care just then how they had taken it. She was only relieved that they had not stopped her.

She stopped looking at the people now. She felt more heavy-hearted, more ashamed with every moment that passed. She leaned heavily upon the arm that supported her. She was glad that soon she would be at home, that soon she would be able to creep into her dark, quiet room, and bury herself somewhere in a corner.

All at once she felt a shock. Bernard had stopped walking abruptly. Before she had opened her eyes or looked up she heard Bernard's loud, masculine voice sing out cheerfully: "Hello, Allen!"

She looked up. Bernard was shaking hands vigorously with a tall, broad-shouldered young fellow.

"Out for your evening stroll?" said Bernard, laughing. "Here, do you know my friend? No? Here, Ina, meet Mr. Allen. Allen, meet Miss Ina Ford."

Ina held out her hand, and said, "How do you do?" almost in a whisper. The young man seized her hand and shook it vigorously. She almost cried out, not with the pain, but with the shock. "Very pleased to make your acquaintance, Miss Ford," said Allen, loudly. Then he turned upon Bernard.

"Say, Graham, I never got to know what on earth happened with those Saint Miguel shares of yours. It seems a year since I met you. And what about Lightning? Were you one of those that lost his last cent on that starved nag?"

Bernard laughed out.

"Not I, Allen. The great joke was that I did have twenty-five on Lightning, but that I changed, at a loss, of course, and took six to one on, on Barbold. Inside information, my boy. Lucky, what? Hayes was luckier even than that . . ."

Ina listened to them as to voices in a dream. She had withdrawn her arm from Bernard's and stood aside. Every time that Bernard laughed she felt as

though someone had shaken her violently. How she wished that there and then she might drop to earth and burst into a torrent of weeping!

In a few minutes the talking came to an end. Allen shook hands with Ina, and was off. Then she and Bernard started to walk again.

"Very fine fellow, that Allen. No end of real kindnesses he's done me. You must meet him again." Bernard rattled on noisily. She did not hear what he was saying.

Walking as she was, with eyes turned downwards, she did not see where Bernard was leading her till she found herself at the door of a brilliantly lighted restaurant. Before she could protest he had pushed her gently in and closed the door behind them. He led her to a table. She sat down mechanically.

Bernard drew his chair up, smacked his hands together, and rubbed them vigorously.

"I'm as hungry as a bear," he said laughingly. "What are you going to have?"

"I don't want anything, Bernard, thank you," she said in a whisper.

"Oh, but nonsense, you must have something. You must be hungry."

"No, really," she said. She was keeping her tears back with difficulty.

"Oh, have some coffee, at any rate." He did not wait for a reply, but looked up and addressed the waitress.

"A coffee and some cakes for the lady. A steak and French fried for me; have it done medium, please."

When the food was brought Bernard flung himself upon it hungrily. Ina nibbled her cake and stole sidelong glances at him. He seemed to have forgotten her. Then she looked away. The restaurant, with its lights and faces, passed from before her. She saw the shadows and looming bushes, heard the wind in the trees and grasses. She felt two encircling arms around her . . . Her cheeks began to burn anew. . . .

When she looked up Bernard was still eating hungrily. He looked round suddenly, and saw her wide, wonder-

ing eyes fixed upon him. He smiled reassuringly. The vacant good-nature of the smile stabbed her. She looked away quickly.

All the way home, leaning on his arm, she was silent. A flood of bitterness and despair raged in her, seeking to find a channel in a single expression. All the way home she sought to formulate some phrase wherewith she might comfort herself bitterly—two or three words that might contain the venom of her suffering. Then, when he paused with her on the stoop, and kissed her

good night, just when his lips were pressing on hers, the sudden phrase leapt to her mind, making her start and draw her lips away: "*The way of a man.*"

She watched him striding down the street. He went on swiftly and turned the corner without looking back once.

All the strength that had kept her up flowed out of her. She leaned wearily against the wall.

"I don't care," she moaned, "I love him, I love him, I love him!"



THE THEFT

By Blanche Shoemaker Wagstaff

I HAVE no soul—nay, do not turn away,
New lover come to me this April night!
It happened long ago when life was light
With youth—I know now how to say
All that befell me on that tragic day!

I loved—and fiercely as the hot stars burn
Amid a summer sky. Delight and tears
Followed upon me in those vanished years;
It seemed celestial secrets I could learn
From lips that give me heaven—I would turn

Love like a nursling child o'er in my heart
Until one day I found him all a-moan,
Wounded and dying like a moonbeam blown
On ruthless winter winds. Then death's cold dart
Smote his white breast. (I heard my dreams depart.)

When love was dead, and laid beneath the sod,
I cried aloud: "Arise, oh soul of mine,
And pour me solace, memory's crimson wine!"
Silence—I wept. No gentle spirit trod
The sunbeams. Love had borne my soul to God.

You say: "It matters not if I be whole."
(I love—you heard me say I had no soul!)



COMPLEXITIES

By Alice P. Raphael

SINCE the death of Pauline's mother, her place of refuge had been the trunk-room, whose atmosphere, heavy with the odor of worn leather, seemed specifically suited to her varying mental processes. Lying flat upon a sagging basket trunk, her feet drawn up beneath her, knees high in the air, she traced her initials over and over again on the dusty dormer window.

And now that she was comfortably settled to think over the problem for which she had evaded an hour's practising, she found herself walking around the edge, as it were, without approaching or distancing herself from it. She leapt in one moment to its very heart and felt again the sensation of stillness which had come to her the night before. She had often been curious to know what they talked of in the kitchen. Sitting on the lowest step of the back stairs was a disappointment; she had suspected the cook of a more interesting nature. The housemaid convinced her that they were discussing her father, her tone was so authoritative.

"No, he'll not marry again, not he, not when he's got such a good-looking mistress." This had kept her awake a good part of the night; what exactly was a mistress? The dictionary left her more deeply in the mire of her imagination; she rushed forwards and backwards, seeking enlightenment from paramour, becoming more bewildered with each succeeding synonym. Instinct told her that her governess was not to be trusted. She sought the cook.

At three she had escaped unnoticed through the side door of the music-room and now lay prone before the

import of her information. It was as if she had two factors to flaunt before her imagination and she lay back, undecided with which to regale herself first. But she could not proceed far along the path of her phantasy without being brought abruptly to a halt by the second factor in her problem, the specific cause of it. Who then, was her father's mistress? Again instinct told her that she could not ask, and her mind seized this point as one of the most important factors in her discovery. Why, she asked herself, should this good-looking woman live with her father somewhere else, and yet marry him?

She reduced the problem again to its primal form and looked at it from her father's angle, picturing with sufficient accuracy his attitude towards their quiet household. She was bored very frequently herself. In contrast she had a vision of someone warmly fragrant and the very word began to allure her.

Her dead mother was never farther from her thoughts. She belonged to a past already. Quite suddenly she realized that her father had assumed an entirely different aspect. He was no longer of the dull background of her life, a much older person who suggested heavily patterned wallpaper. He had about him the mystery of the outer world, of which for the first time she seemed an integral part.

It was as if she were peering over a high wall outside of which a host of ideas pressed closer and closer, like a noisy crowd, clamoring and confused. Then the wall which had protected her childhood crumpled about her like cardboard and she seemed to be standing quite alone in the midst of strangers.

THE GREATEST THING IN THE WORLD

By Edwin Baird

YOUNG Tracy Merrill dropped another Best Seller on the pile of late novels beside his chair.

Happily, at that moment, there entered Wung Joy, his Chinese servant, who, to the talkative, was a joyous delight; for not only did he agree with everything one said, but his discourse was limited to monosyllables and a peculiar sibilant noise, which he emitted by baring his yellow teeth and hissing through them like a ruffled cat.

"Joy," said young Mr. Merrill, indicating the last Best Seller with a disparaging finger, "the author of that book is an ass."

"Siss-s-s-s—se-e-et!" concurred Wung Joy.

Mr. Merrill spread his fingers and indicated all the books.

"So are all of them asses," he declared. "They write on the theory that life consists entirely of sentiment; the soft, sticky, marshmallow sort. Could you imagine anything sillier?"

"Siss-s-s—seet!" replied the Celestial, which was equivalent to saying "Not in a million years."

"Joy," continued the young man of wealth, rising from his chair, "I'd a purpose in consuming that bale of fiction, as you doubtless suppose. I didn't do it for pleasure. I did it out of curiosity. Joy, my boy," and the devourer of novels drew a deep breath, "I AM GOING TO WRITE A BOOK!"

"Siss-s—stt, stt, seet!" exclaimed the horrified Chinaman, which meant, no doubt, "Great Heavens!"

"It will not be like other books. Other books deal with wealthy young

men falling in love with beautiful young women, falling out, then falling in again, and so, in-and-out and out-and-in, for three hundred pages or more, until they get married in the last chapter. My novel will deal with stronger things—virile, masculine, vital. There will be no love element. Perhaps—who knows?—I may be the author of the Great American Novel. In any event"—he glanced at the big clock in a corner of the room; the hands pointed to a quarter of eight—"get my hat and coat. I am going out. And, Joy—you will prepare dinner for four guests, to be served at nine."

"All light, Mlister." And, with no more disturbance than a snake creates when foraging through wet grass, the Oriental glided from the room. When Wung Joy said, "All light, Mlister," it meant that everything would be attended to perfectly.

Young Mr. Merrill left his apartment, descended to the ground floor in the elevator and paused in the vestibule, drawing on his gloves. It was a freezing March night, but he did not call a cab. He turned the fur collar of his overcoat up, walked to the next corner of the fashionable Avenue, and turned west and caught a downtown street-car. He alighted at the corner of Broadway and Forty-third street, and watched the theater-goers swirl through the Rialto in kaleidoscopic streams. Within three minutes' walk were most of New York's playhouses, and the evening rush was at its height. Presently, from that whirl of eager life, his eye plucked his man.

A huge fellow he was, lubberly bearing and plain attire, and beneath his derby hat, half a size too small and cocked at a hazardous angle, was a face of remarkable ugliness. In a twinkling young Merrill had him by the arm.

"Well met!" cried he. "If this isn't luck—"

"B'ate it!" was the cold interruption. "Don't ye know who I am?"

"Why, no," smiled Merrill. "But I'd like to."

"I'm Martin Conkey, and a sergeant o' police. Now will ye blow, or must I call the waggin?"

"Neither, Mr. Conkey. I repeat, 'Well met!' Let us step inside here and I'll tell you why. I believe they serve excellent Tom and Jerry."

Officer Conkey drew his crumpled brows together in a dour frown, and, embracing his walrus mustache with an extremely large and excessively red hand, eyed young Merrill darkly. What suspicion he may have entertained was banished by that young man's wholesome blue eyes and ruddy, outdoor skin, for a little later they were seated in an upholstered compartment of a theatrical buffet, conversing comfortably over two steaming white mugs.

"If, as ye say," said Officer Conkey, lifting his mug, "you're Mr. Tracy Merrill—which o' course ye are, sir—son o' the late laminted Philip T. Merrill, the millionaire railroad prisint, why, sure now, I'll be most hearty glad to sup wid ye. But why ye'll have it so I cannot understand."

Young Merrill smiled so exuberantly that more than half of his perfect white teeth were displayed.

"Don't try to, my dear Conkey." He opened his watch. "We'd better be off. It's eight-twenty, and we dine at nine; and there are yet three guests to be invited, whose names I do not know and whose faces I have never seen."

"One minute, thin, till I tilyphone."

In five the sergeant was back from the booth, and together they went into the icy night. They had not gone far in the crowd before Merrill collided (quite purp uly) with a gaunt, raw-

boned, hollow-eyed man of unshaven face and unprepossessing mien, whose chief desire at that moment was to efface himself from the well-dressed pleasure-seekers thronging on all sides of him.

"I beg your pardon," said young Merrill, laying a friendly hand on the man's shoulder, "and I am glad we met. I want you to know my friend, Martin Conkey."

"S'all right," growled he of the sunken jaw, looking somewhat confused. "S'all right."

He started off. Young Merrill genially blocked his way.

"Don't run away, my friend. You'll find us a decent sort. Mr. Conkey is a member of the police force, and I am Tracy Merrill, of no particular calling. And you?"

There was no resisting his cordiality. The lean, lank man capitulated, albeit with caution.

"I don't know," he submitted, fingering a brass pin in his shiny cravat, "what sort of game I'm up against, but I'll sit in. My name's Felix Babbage, and I'm a gripman on the El. I guess I'm pleased to meet you gents." He offered a calloused hand.

Young Merrill smiled as he shook it. "Felix, you're a man after my own heart. Let's all light up."

They entered a cigar store, and, having ordered the best in the shop, he took the gripman aside and talked with him earnestly.

"Say!" exclaimed Felix, chewing his perfect excitedly and fidgeting the brass stickpin like a baby playing with its toes, "you're what I call a genuwine sport. Say, I know a feller what'll fill the bill fine. Spike Allen's his name, and he's a lunchman in a Baltimore hash joint on Twenty-seventh Street. He's off watch right soon. Say, c'mon; I'll lead you to him."

Young Merrill considered the proposal thoughtfully. "What sort of looking man is your friend Allen?"

"Lord bless you, there ain't no describing Spike!" Felix laughed at the ambiguity as one who plans a rare sur-

prise. "Spike's ondescribable. But, say, c'mon; I'll interduce you."

Thus persuaded, they went to the dairy lunchroom in West Twenty-seventh Street; but a glance at the young man behind the marble-top counter deflated Merrill's hopes. Truly the lunchman was a soul misplaced. Well for him had he been a demonstrator of cold cream in a Thirty-fourth Street drugstore, or a dispenser of soda water near a finishing school, but a purveyor of buckwheat cakes and country sausage—never! He was cloyingly, sickeningly sweet and handsome. His glossy black hair was sleeked gracefully above either perfect eyebrow and parted as accurately in the center as though chiseled by a sculptor. His lashes were long and silky, his dark eyes luminously soft, and his skin was as smooth and as peachy as a girl's.

"That's him!" triumphed Felix. "Didn't I tell you he was ondescribable? C'mon; lemme—"

"No!" refused young Merrill firmly. "I'm sorry, Felix, but he won't do. We shall have to look elsewhere."

Obediently, though puzzled, his newly made friends followed him back to the street and they again put forth in a northern direction. The theater rush was over, and few were astir save stragglers and belated home-seekers. Those they encountered were observed narrowly by Merrill. But always in vain. Once he even stopped and scrutinized an Italian white wing, plying brush to gutter with furious gusto. Here, too, he was disappointed, and, with a troubled yet hopeful air, returned to his strange quest. By now his followers were become suspiciously silent, and Sergeant Conkey was on the point of mutiny.

At Fortieth Street, at the Metropolitan Opera building, they halted. As one who gambles for a capital prize, young Merrill passed eagerly along the line of taxicabs waiting at the curb, stopping before each to scan its pilot. This caused comment among the chauffeurs, and Felix and Conkey lagged in the rear, unwilling to be associated

with such strange behavior. Suddenly they were startled by a shout of triumph, and when they caught up with their leader they found him pumping the hand of some diminutive person half submerged in the chauffeur's seat of a taxicab.

"I've found him!" he exulted. "I've found the third guest. Since it's nearly nine, we'd best abandon hope of a fourth."

Conkey stepped to the front of the car and peered at the recipient of the enthusiastic handshaking. Sunken in the shadows, he seemed a dwarf; and then he hopped to the sidewalk, and an arc lamp's glare revealed him. He was a hunchback. Further, his face was wizened and misshapen, and one ear was withered to a horrible mockery. He was a monster in miniature.

"Well, well, well!" he called good-naturedly. "Whose birt'day is it?"

"Brother," said young Merrill, "I want you to meet my friends—"

"Lew Pinney's me monacker," piped the cheery little fellow. "Shoot when loaded, Major."

"Mr. Pinney, this is Mr. Conkey, and this is Mr. Babbage, both splendid fellows."

The hunchback sealed the introductions with a leathery hand that suggested a strength disproportionate to his stature.

"Now, Mr. Pinney," beamed young Merrill, "you may consider your car chartered for the night. There is, however, one condition."

Pinney twisted a corner of his mouth into a droll grimace and with one finger slowly closed his left eye. "I'm hep, pal. I ain't been a New York shofe two years for not'in'."

"The condition," said young Merrill, acknowledging the pleasantry with a smile, "is that you dine with us. Is it agreeable?"

"Sa-ay—what t'e 'ell! Who's looney—you or me?"

For answer Merrill lifted him upon the chauffeur's seat, then held the door open for his companions to enter. Pin-

ney cogitated a moment, flipped a coin and decided to risk it.

"Where to, Slim?" he inquired resignedly; and added: "If you say de Matteawan bughouse I'll call a bull."

Mr. Merrill didn't say Matteawan, and they sped merrily toward the upper avenue.

The first object to arrest Merrill's eye, upon entering his apartment, was Wung Joy, gagged and bound, and strapped to a massive mahogany desk. The Mongolian's face was distorted with hatred as he rolled his eyes and strained at his bonds in a frenzied endeavor to gesture toward the rear. A thick wad of blotting paper, secured in his mouth by a towel knotted at the base of his skull, effectually forbade even so little as his favorite hiss.

Merrill turned to the police sergeant, who loomed behind him in the doorway.

"Evidently a case for you, Conkey. From Joy's facial contortion I gather you'll find the culprit somewhere at the back. Meanwhile I'll release the victim before he throws a celestial fit."

Nodding grimly, Conkey produced a blue-steel revolver and strode down the hall, while Merrill unbound the servant. The Chinaman was too hysterical to do else than chatter wildly in his native tongue (an unprecedented occurrence that resembled a premature explosion of firecrackers), so Merrill entrusted him to the mercies of Babage and Pinney, and hastened after the officer.

He was discovered in the dining-room, towering with contempt over a trembling wretch, who crouched, like a cornered rat, against the sideboard.

"I found 'm cl'anin' the boofit, Mr. Mirrill. Ain't he the handsome flat worker, now!" And to the burglar: "Stand up, damn ye, and let the man you would rob get a square look at ye! He seen ye go out, Mr. Mirrill, and judged he would have an 'asy job of it, wid none to handle but a luckless Chink. Kape an eye on 'm, sir, till I call up headquarters. We'll settle wid him!"

Young Merrill, however, had drawn

close to the housebreaker and was surveying him in no unfriendly manner. He was a slight, scrawny man, insufficiently clad, whose age was anything between twenty-five and forty; and, though the room was warm, he trembled as one suffering intense cold. Unless his sunken cheeks lied, he had not been on intimate terms with a square meal in many a day. But Merrill was interested most in his abnormal ugliness, which was hideously striking.

"Mr. Conkey," said he, detaining that official, "I am ashamed of you, really. Can you not see that an all-wise providence has sent this gentleman to us? *He is our fourth guest!*" And he clapped his left palm to the burglar's right shoulder and wrung him warmly by the hand. "Brother, well met! My name's Merrill, and this is Mr. Conkey, a sergeant of police."

"John Lobdell's my tag," supplied the burglar, doubtfully extending a thin, dirty hand. "I guess I won't mention my perfession."

"I have other guests in the study," interposed Merrill, pleasantly filling in an otherwise awkward gap. "Suppose we return to them? Unless I mistake, Joy is ready to serve dinner. The table is set, as you see."

The housebreaker looked as though he actually wanted to blush.

"I-I—say, I-I—" he stopped and licked his lips, then started quite afresh: "Say, pal, I'm turrible sorry, but I pinched some of yer cut glass and silver, and it's in the bag there. The stuff was smeared all over the table—"

"My dear Lobdell, it's quite all right. My man will attend to everything." And taking the arm of the robber as though he were a captain of finance (no analogy intended), the host escorted him grandly from the room.

At a loss for speech, with blank amazement on his ox-like face, the police official followed.

In Merrill's study—a liberal appellation, for no studying was ever done there—introductions were blithely made, while Wung Joy, recovered from his fright and in full possession of his

sibilance, glided snakily kitchenward. An extraordinarily large room for a New York apartment building, it shone gorgeously with curios, antiques, rare pieces of art and bric-a-brac, and a thousand odd things picked up casually on rambles 'round the globe. Upon that room he had lavished a fortune; and since he was fundamentally luxury-loving, its appointments were of an opulence to make a rajah envious. Yet his guests were unembarrassed. He was celebrated for his incomparable skill in being all things to all men—and to not a few women. He could shine as brilliantly at a steamfitters' picnic or at a chorus girls' ball as in the drawing-room of an old Boston family.

Thus when Wung Joy poked his yellow head through the doorway, with his appetizing "All light, Mlister," wizened little Pinney was in the midst of his best barroom story, and Conkey, Babbage and Lobdell were lolling back in their rich, silken chairs, flipping the ash from their Russian cigarettes as blissfully as though sawdust caught it instead of a rare Persian rug worth sufficient to keep them in comfort for years.

From cocktails and bluepoints to coffee and cheese, the dinner progressed brilliantly. A costly champagne was served, and Merrill marked indulgently, though with a trace of apprehension, little Pinney guzzling it like beer—and evincing no more consequence than he would from water. Not until cigars were lighted did the host touch upon the object behind his hospitality. He then stood up in his place, rested his long fingers on the lace-covered linen and asked for the ears of his guests.

"Friends," said he, when he had them, "as you may have surmised, a purpose underlies this little dinner party. It is a literary purpose. Briefly, I am writing, or am about to write, A BOOK." He paused to let the significance of his words sink thoroughly in.

There was an uneasy stir among his listeners, and Felix Babbage displayed the first disappointment he had shown

that night. "And I thought," he lamented, in a whisper to Conkey, "that he was a high-life gambler!"

"Possibly none of you reads books," continued the spokesman. "Most of them are not worth reading. My book, however, will be different. You will all want to read it. There will be no love-making in it. It will present life—raw, bleeding, quivering—just as it is. No glossing of the facts, no silly romancing or flights of ecstasy; none of that rubbish."

He paused for a sip of ice water.

"Where do we kick in?" piped little Pinney, emptying his wine goblet at a gulp.

"I'm coming to that. You men—if you will be so kind—will furnish me the raw copy, without which there could be no novel. I selected you with great care and deliberation, for you are to live through the future ages between book covers. Is not the thought awe-inspiring?"

If the grave silence of the four homely auditors was any criterion, it was.

Young Merrill went on in a kindling glow of enthusiasm: "I want to look at the world through your eyes. I want each of you to tell me what life means to you." His gaze went around the circle of flushed, ugly countenances, and rested finally upon the hollow-cheeked burglar. "Mr. Lobdell, we will hear from you first. Yours is surely an interesting story." He sat down, and his guests, as though uncertain what to do, gave a decorous little round of handclapping.

The housebreaker stood up.

"At de outset," he began, addressing the company in general and shielding his cigar in an unclean palm, "I wanten say dat Mr. Merrill here is de whitest guy I ever seen"—and he turned and bowed very respectfully to that gentleman. "I tell yer, fellers," his voice husky with emotion, "dere ain't not'in I wouldn't do for a guy like dat. I'd lie for 'im, steal for 'im—"

"Oh, please, now!" protested young Mr. Merrill, looking, as he felt, ex-

tremely uncomfortable. "Tell us something about yourself."

The burglar puffed furiously at his cigar in a cold sweat of self-consciousness. "To tell de trut', I—oh, hell, Mr. Merrill, I ain't no oraytor like you."

"Tell us in your own way," and the young millionaire's voice was gentle as a woman's, "just what life means to you."

"Well, den—" the man removed his cigar abruptly, thrust it back in his mouth, revolved it with his lips, and, again shielding it in his grimy palm, plunged headlong into the most extraordinary narrative young Merrill had ever heard. "Ever since I remember I allers been afeared o' some'in'—I don't know hardly what. D'yer ever wake up in de dark and t'ink somebody was standin' over you wit' a carvin' knife, all keen and sharp, and feel de icy sweat go tricklin' down yer sides, and ever' second you expect dat knife to go rippin' t'rough yer t'roat? Well, dat's how I feel, *allers!* Mebbe if any o' yous'd been in t'ree state pens, like I been, yous'd understand. When you been in de pen, and done yer bit and is set free, you know yer watched ever' second. Ever' place you go, ever' move you make, yer *watched!* And you can't get work and you do get hungry, and den you get *killin'* hungry and grow desp'rit, and—when you wake up yer back in de pen again and right where you started in de beginnin'. Oh, it's just plain hell! . . ."

For upward of an hour he spoke, and he told a tale of horror that brought a lump in Merrill's throat and hard looks to the faces of the others. Of a drunken father and an outraged mother, of a half-starved childhood and a darkened youth, of sleepless nights in wintry alleys, of a myriad sordid details of poverty in the slums and the crime of a city's underworld, he told in the only language he knew. Young Merrill saw that he was working himself into a dangerous state of emotion, and when all at once he swayed, clenched his hands and collapsed in his chair like a broken weed, he was first

to reach his side. The burglar was sobbing like a child.

Wung Joy, who during dinner had regarded the fourth guest with sinister animosity, stood in the doorway of the butler's pantry, with hissing suggestions of a siphon of carbonated water. The master silenced him with a look and bent over the weeping burglar, laying a kindly hand on his convulsive shoulders.

"Come, old man, this won't do. Buck up. Here, take a sip of champagne. All's well with you now. I'm your friend, remember."

Martin Conkey, to whom all this "agony" was excessively distasteful, consulted a gun-metal watch, with the tentative remark: "It's gittin' on t'ward 'livin' o'clock, gints."

"Then we'll adjourn until another evening. If you gentlemen will leave your addresses I'll mail the invitations." Merrill passed a fountain pen and an envelope, upon the back of which they wrote the desired information. Excusing himself, he went to his study, where he wrote four checks, the first for five hundred dollars, the others for one hundred each. The largest, which was drawn to the order of "bearer," was enclosed in an envelope addressed to John Lobdell (who had no permanent abode, it seemed); the rest were directed to Messrs. Conkey, Babbage and Pinney.

Pocketing the missives, he sat for a space toying with the penholder, running it back and forth between his fingers, absently, aimlessly. A profound loneliness sat broodingly upon him. The light from the electric desk-lamp, falling upon his features, showed a face of sorrow, of sadness. Suddenly he jerked himself together.

"The devil!" he muttered, and switched off the light and returned to the dining-room.

"I've decided to see you all home," he announced—"if you must go."

"I promised the missus," said Officer Conkey, "I'd be home before 'livin'. I tilyphoned her from the boofit."

Merrill bit his lip. "The 'missus'?"

Do you, by any chance, mean your wife, Mr. Conkey?"

"Why, sure. Who else?" Mr. Conkey chuckled.

Mr. Merrill chuckled, too, though doubtfully. His flash of disappointment remained. "Well, if we're all set, let us be on our way."

In jovial spirits they donned overcoats (all save Lobdell, who had none) and went clattering to the elevator and merrily down to the street, where little Pinney cranked his engine while the others bundled themselves inside.

Their first stop was at a little frame house in a by-street of upper Harlem, and Sergeant Conkey sprang to the ground and boisterously invited all inside for a sociable smoke and a can of beer. Merrill regretfully declined, protesting that the hour was something too late, but he readily agreed to go as far as the front door to meet the officer's wife.

He went, in fact, as far as the stiff little "parlor," and there entered a plain-featured, middle-aged woman of toil-marked hands and worry-seamed face. In the crook of one arm she carried a baby, to the hem of her skirt clung another but little older, while three children, with round, curious eyes, silently brought up the rear.

Some perfunctory amenities, and the millionaire returned, rather thoughtfully, to his comrades. With him was a vision of the love-light that had leapt to the woman's faded eyes when they rested upon her husband; and he saw it still, this vision, as he went whirling through the frosty night. And again there settled upon his boyish face a forlorn expression of loneliness.

Felix, the gripman, spoke next.

"They's a young lady, Mr. Merrill," said he, "I'd like for to have you meet. It's a onmoral time, I know, but her folks is up late, and she'd be oncommon tickled for to meet you, sir."

Merrill regarded the gaunt, ugly man in silence. Hollow eyes, coarse face, sluggish wit—could any woman love this man?

"Ah—your sister, perhaps?"

"Well, no. Hardly that. She's my intended."

"Your fiancée?"

"I guess that's the fancy name for it."

The girl lived over a West Side meat market, and young Merrill and the gripman found her with her parents, darning stockings for a brood of sleeping brothers and sisters. She was a rather pretty girl, named Carrie Maloney, and she greeted the millionaire with shy formality, veiling her Irish blue eyes with dark lashes as she remarked politely: "Pleased to make your acquaintance."

They chatted a few minutes on the severity of the weather, then bade the Maloneys good-night. Felix, however, lingered behind in the dark hallway. Merrill, groping down the narrow staircase, heard two moist smacks of unmistakable origin—and Felix joined him, a trifle apologetic. And for the third time that evening young Mr. Merrill suffered the dry pangs of an inner isolation.

There remained, presently, only the burglar to be taken home, and as this seemed a procedure of some uncertainty, the Samaritan addressed him doubtfully.

"Now any place you'd like to go, Lobdell—there's some sort of hangout, I take it?"

The man's sunken cheeks flushed and he gulped audibly, as though he wished to say something difficult to utter.

"Pal," he began chokingly, "yer de whitest guy—"

"Now, please," begged his benefactor, yet with a sharpness which showed how unpleasant such compliments were to him, "don't let's have any more of that."

"I gotcha, sir. I—what I wanta say—I-I didn't tell you ever't'ing to-night, sir. You see—well, de fact is, I'm married."

Merrill groaned. "*Et tu Brute!*" mourned he.

"I can't say as to that, sir," replied the honest burglar, "but we was hitched t'ree weeks ago. 'Course it was a nutty

play for *me* to make, but I seen she was de only moll for me, and she seen de same. She don't know what I am, and, please Gawd, she never will know—"

"Where do you live?" cut in his hearer, anxious to forestall another emotional storm.

He gave an address in a tenement district, and Pinney was instructed accordingly.

Merrill accompanied the ex-convict to the top floor of one of the teeming rookeries, and there, in a miserable room at the back, found the bride of three weeks amidst the squalor of hopeless poverty. While she was embracing her husband he turned his back and slipped a fifty-dollar bill into the envelope containing the five-hundred-dollar check. Later he gave it to Lobdell with his congratulations.

"Don't open it," he requested, fearful of another flood of gratitude, "until I'm gone. Good luck and happiness to both of you, and good-night."

He backed hurriedly from the room and sped down the rickety rear staircase with a rapidity that threatened to disjoin that rotting structure. He found little Pinney striding up and down in the snow, slapping his arms and chest to excite warmth.

"Now for home!" The young millionaire sighed as he opened the taxi door.

It was evident Pinney had something of moment on his mind, and when he hopped, frog-like, upon his seat he released it.

"Say, pal—Mr. Merrill, I mean—would you mind doin' me a favor, please, sir?"

"Name it, Pinney."

"Would you mind—only for a minute, y'understand—if I stopped to say 'howdy' to a skoit I know? It's only a few blocks—"

"A skirt? You mean, of course, a girl?"

"Sure. She's night waitress in a feed shop, and I wantcha to meet 'er. Believe me, she's some swell dame. I got 'er a box o' chuc'lates; bought 'em

at the drug store while you was upstairs."

Merrill ground his teeth. "I shall be charmed to meet her," he said.

A *whiz* through a maze of darkened thoroughfares, a short spurt up Sixth Avenue, and they stopped before a white-front restaurant of the twenty-cent variety. Three short blasts from Pinney's horn, and a round pink-and-white face, topped by a remarkable lemon-colored coiffure, popped like a cuckoo from behind a coffee urn; then they went inside, Pinney secreting his confectionery under his coat.

That the waitress, whom Pinney introduced merely as "Maggie," was very fond of the distorted, misshapen little man there could be no doubt, though some may have thought she had an odd way of expressing it. She bantered him, twitted him, ridiculed him, until most men would have fled in despair; but the hunchback was a lightning wit and sent back as good as he received. They all had coffee and repartee, and the millionaire voiced a wish that he be invited to the wedding, and he and his chauffeur started northward.

And, yes, there was the loneliness in young Merrill's face again, only now it was hardened by a bitter self-pity. More than once on his homeward journey, slumping wearily in the taxicab seat, he swore softly below his breath.

It was after midnight when he climbed the four flights of stairs to his apartment (for the elevators had hesitated), and as he neared his floor he saw a district messenger ringing his bell. He signed the boy's book, gave him a quarter, took the message—and the next instant, having caught sight of the crest on the envelope, he uttered a low cry, and called the boy back and gave him a dollar.

With fingers that trembled in spite of him, he tore open the envelope and read:

Dear Boy: I didn't tell you the truth this afternoon. I couldn't—not while you were so close to me. I had to wait until you were gone. I wanted to tell

you then, but **I just couldn't.** But now that you are away I can write what is in my heart. I love you, Tracy. **I love you! I LOVE YOU!**

There! That is all I have to say to you—now.

Ever your

Edith.

He was going through the note for the third time, his heart racing like a cannonball, when Wung Joy, rubbing sleepy eyes, opened the door in response to the messenger's ring. Before the astonished servant could squeak a protest he was brushed violently aside by his ecstatic master, rushing studyward.

Lighting the lamp on his desk, young

Merrill seized a sheet of paper and wrote:

Darling Girl: I am the happiest man in the universe. And I am coming to you. I am mad, mad, mad with love, and I'll be there before breakfast tomorrow—no, this morning.

Forever your
Tracy.

Then he tore up the three checks in his pocket and drew three new ones, increasing their value fivefold and writing on the face of each:

I find I shall need no further copy.
—T. M.



LES DERNIERS BAISERS D'UNE MÈRE

By Denise Fay Petit

MOI je suis loin de ma mère.
Loin au delà de la mer est ma mère . . .
Les derniers baisers de ma mère sont loin;
Je les ai reçus là-bas.
Tous les baisers qu'elle m'écrit ne sont rien;
Tous les baisers que je lui écris ne sont rien du tout,
Mais les baisers qu'on reçoit là-bas,
Ils restent un peu de temps, puis
Ils s'envolent. Les baisers ne restent pas
Longtemps. Mais quand on est si loin,
Alors les pensers reviennent des derniers baisers d'une mère.



EVERY man has to believe in something. Sometimes it is a god; sometimes it is a woman; sometimes it is a system of drinking without getting drunk.



A WOMAN is as old as the man she wishes were her husband thinks she is.

THE SAINT

By Helen Woljeska

SHE did not wear medieval robes and a halo. She wore fashionable frocks and expensive hats, and she played bridge. . . . Still she was a saint.

Hers was a quiet life, confined by the double wall of conventions and delicate health. Its tragedy lay in the absence of all tragedy. Its pathos in the denial of great griefs and great joys.

She was a woman of slender girlish figure and sweet faded face—prematurely faded. For she was but in her early thirties, the age when most women's charm is at its height, when they combine the dew of youth with the glow of maturity.

She was not young and beautiful. When you analyzed her, you easily found faults of texture and feature and structure. But you did not wish to analyze her. She was lovely. And when you heard the soft low voice and looked into the gentle dark eyes, you felt the harmony of a fragrant soul and were content.

Had she known rebellion before she won this harmony? Or had she merely bowed her brown head from the first? As long as I knew her, she had been reconciled to the secondary part for which the Unknown Powers had cast her—the part of one who holds first place in no one's love and no one's hate. And she played this chétif rôle bravely and brightly, with tenderness and grace and devotion.

She lived quietly, with her mother who had other children to share in her heart, with her sister who had a husband and children of her own. And had *she* ever loved? If timid allusions were rightly interpreted, the one whom

her heart had chosen did not choose her. In love, as in beauty, vitality, and everything else, she had to stand back and let others take the prize. There are many of us who share her fate—but few who bear it with brave humility, so beautifully.

Still there had been one great love in her life. The love for her father. He had died suddenly, when she was still in her teens. But his memory was as vivid within her, as though she had seen him but yesterday.

In her last illness, a few days before her death, she said to her mother: "I think Father wants me!" It was characteristic of her that she should have retained the homely, child-like faith of past ages. In her happy belief the dead had retained his personality and waited to be reunited to his dear ones in a better land. . . . With this naïve thought in her heart, with the name she loved on her lip, she took her flight from the world that had given so little in return for all her loveliness and gentle forbearance.

When I saw her again, her face looked as though chiseled in marble—so white, so cold, so distant. The pale lids and dark lashes covered her brown eyes, never to release them again. And all about her were flowers.

It was a lovely day in May. The sun shone gloriously outside. The silken curtains rustled in the breeze. The palms waved and the candles flickered. And on her marble face there hovered a sweet mysterious smile, as though, in all simplicity, she had learned a strange and lovely secret.

Perhaps she had.

KISSES

By S. Jay Kaufman

THE CHARACTERS

ROBERT (29 and exquisite)

CHARLIE (26 . . . 30 . . . 32 . . . it is of no consequence)

A VERY YOUNG GIRL (less than 17)

A WOMAN (say about 41, but charming)

ONE OF ROBERT'S AGE (semi-hard or rather semi-wise)

AN IDEAL SISTER (she may be 20, 24, but looks just 21)

THE SCENE—*The play is a comedy in five very short scenes. Of these, the first may be represented either by a street drop in "one," or it may be a plain velvet curtain. The other four scenes are enacted in the space directly behind this velvet curtain. It is the same throughout. It may be a drawing room, but it is the author's idea to have another circular velvet curtain, directly in front of which are two small gold chairs.*

SCENE ONE—*Charlie, dressed in dinner jacket, enters from the left, quite nonchalantly. From the right enters Robert. Robert is dressed in evening clothes, and is smoking through a long holder. Charlie sees him.*

CHARLIE

Hello, Robert!

ROBERT

Hello, Charlie!

CHARLIE

Hello, Robert, how are you?

ROBERT

You don't really want to know, but I'm all right. You look all right.

CHARLIE

Yes, I'm splendid, thanks. Where are you going?

ROBERT

You don't really want to know that—an appointment.

CHARLIE

An appointment, eh?

ROBERT

Yes, an appointment. Why not?

CHARLIE

No reason, no reason, except that you have more "appointments" than any man I know.

ROBERT

Again I say, why not? Why not? I like the ladies.

CHARLIE

No doubt about it.

ROBERT

No doubt at all, and I want *them* to like *me*.

CHARLIE

Do you think they do?

ROBERT

I don't know. I think so. (*Bored.*)
It isn't difficult to make them like you.

CHARLIE

God! but you are conceited.

ROBERT

Conceit, my dear fellow, not a bit of it, not a bit of it. Do you know what conceit is?

CHARLIE

Yes, I believe I do.

ROBERT

No, you do not. You are like a host of other people. You think you think, but you do not. You mouth the words, the phrases and the opinions of others. You use labels instead of thoughts, and you make one label do for every variation and every kind of thing, forgetting the childish old platitude that there are no two things quite alike in the world. Now, Charlie, I don't want to teach you. I thoroughly hate people who teach me; I want to be quickened to think for myself, or, better still, to feel, to live . . . you know, and perhaps then if I show you that you are wrong about this conceit idea, it may quicken you to think for yourself hereafter. You believe you know what conceit is? I'll show you that you do not. You think that if a handsome man walks along the street, throws his head up in the air and says "What a handsome man I am!"—you say that he is conceited. He is *not* conceited. He is a true fool. He is a prig. He is unutterably stupid. I'll tell you what a *conceited* man is! A conceited man is an *ugly* man who walks along the street, throws his head up in the air and says "What a handsome man I am!" Conceit, my dear Charlie, is the assumption of a quality that one does not possess. Do you understand? Now, I am not conceited, nor am I a prig. I am not even vain.

CHARLIE

Well, what about this success of yours with women?

ROBERT

Simple, good old-fashioned common sense. And what amusement! Anybody with an ounce—with an ounce?—with an *atom*, of brains can kiss any woman within fifteen minutes after he has met her, if he uses his brain and watches her brains work.

CHARLIE

Any woman?

ROBERT

That's what I said, *any* woman, and most women know it. But it's no feat to kiss a woman. The trick is to make *her* kiss *you*, and make her do it by channelling her thoughts. You know, like a river, channel.

CHARLIE

And you can do this, too?

ROBERT

Charlie, your doubt and your questions *almost* annoy me. Not only is there nobody at home, there is no home; not only was there never a foundation, but, Charlie, there never was any ground there except, perhaps, a cemetery plot! All dead—dead.

CHARLIE

Perhaps. But *can* you make any woman kiss you?

ROBERT

Do it? I've done it!

CHARLIE (*thrills at a scheme*)

I say, Robert, you are very keen on the Belgian Relief Fund, aren't you?

ROBERT

VERY! (*His pet idea.*) I think it is the finest charity that ever—

CHARLIE

Yes, yes, I know all about that, but cut the oration and listen, for a change, Robert. You say you can kiss *any*

woman within fifteen minutes after you have met her!

ROBERT

Charlie, I've got an appointment. Don't bore me with this silly questioning. I said kiss *me*, and I said fifteen minutes.

CHARLIE

Answer my question.

ROBERT

Yes, I do. What of it?

CHARLIE

What of it? What of it? I'll bet you a thousand dollars to go to the Belgian Relief I can pick four women you can't make kiss you within a week!

ROBERT

Four? Is that all?

CHARLIE

Four.

ROBERT

That is less than one a day. A thousand dollars?

CHARLIE

A thousand dollars for the Belgian Relief.

ROBERT

Within a week?

CHARLIE

Within a week.

ROBERT

It's a bet.

(*They clasp hands.*)

The lights go out.

SECOND SCENE—*Robert enters with a girl, aged sixteen or seventeen. He is bored to distraction. As old as possible in manner, not in appearance.*

SHE

How good of Charlie to have brought you to the tennis match this afternoon!

HE

Yes, it was good of him. But I'm afraid I am too old for tennis.

SHE

Not a bit of it—not a bit of it.

HE

Yes, yes, I'm quite an old man.

SHE (*shyly*)

But I like old men.

HE

Why do you like old men?

SHE

Because they know so much more than (*pouting*) young boys.

HE

Perhaps that's true. But are you sure that they know the sort of thing you want to know?

SHE

Yes, indeed. I am sure.

HE

What is it you want to know?

SHE

I don't know, I'm sure.

HE

I thought so.

SHE

But I'm sure I would be willing to know anything you want to tell me.

HE

Anything?

SHE

Yes, anything.

HE

Then, suppose I told you that I was a rogue—and a very sorry rogue.

SHE

I'd love it.

HE

You'd love it, eh? And suppose I told you that I was a roué!

SHE

What is a roué?

HE

You don't know?

SHE

No, I don't.

HE

It is someone very old who kisses very young girls.

SHE

Then I should say it was very nice.

HE

Very nice? You like being kissed?

SHE

It depends on the man.

HE

Suppose it were I? Don't you think I am too old?

SHE

I told you before I didn't believe so.

HE

Then you *want* me to? But I always dislike asking.

SHE

Then that means that you have asked a great many times.

HE

Oh, no. You must not twist my ideas 'round. I never have asked, and I am too old to begin asking now.

SHE

Then you didn't ask me?

HE

Oh, no, I didn't ask you.

SHE

What would you say if I asked you?

HE

I cannot tell what I should do. I could tell better after you asked me.

SHE

Well, then, I do ask. May I—*please*—kiss—you?

(And she does. The lights go out. They disappear through the curtain and immediately thereafter he appears with a woman of forty-one. He is very shy, very young, very uncertain.) THIRD SCENE.

SHE

So you believe in Suffrage? I am so glad.

HE

I don't know—I think I do!

SHE

Oh, but your friend Charles said you were most enthusiastic when he presented you.

HE

Charles often gets one in peculiar situations, but if Charles says so, I suppose I do.

SHE

That's splendid. We are so glad to have young men interested in our movement.

HE

Why?

SHE

Because young men attract young women.

HE *(pointedly but still boyishly)*

Do they? Young women don't attract young men. Do you know, dear lady, I think that older people invariably have more real charm than young, unsettled minds.

SHE

Oh! *(She gushes.)* May I call you Robert? That's so sweet of you, you fine boy.

HE *(shows audience it is all over)*
I really mean it.

SHE

And do you really mean it of me, you great wonder?

HE

Oh—I'm—I'm—afraid—I—

SHE

Come, now, be frank, *dear*.

HE

Frank! You really want me to be frank?

SHE

Of course I do, *dearest*. What do you mean?

HE

I—I—I—

SHE

Do tell me.

HE

I mean this—that when a woman says that she is about to be frank, you may depend on it that she is about to tell a very distasteful or scandalous thing. Frankness, my dear lady, is merely an excuse. Why not be honest? That is, honest with yourself, and being honest with yourself, be honest with the big world. But, you see, I am so YOUNG—

SHE

Sweet—sweet—boy.

HE

—that I am afraid to say what I really believe.

SHE

You say whatever you like, my lamb-kin, and use your "be-honest" idea, I like it.

HE

Do you want me to be honest?

SHE

Certainly I do, *mon ami*.

HE

But if I told you what I really thought, you'd think me simply childish.

SHE

There, my beautiful, why not be old-

er in the sense of courage and see what I'd think?

HE

Why don't you help me to be courageous?

SHE

Help you, pet? Certainly I'll help you. What is it you want to tell me?

HE

Oh, I can't tell you when you ask me as bluntly as that!

SHE (*his head in her hands*)

Well, then, I won't say it so "bluntly." What is it the sweet boy wants to tell me?

HE

Oh, that's so much better!

SHE

And what does the darlingest of all darlings want to say to his precious?

HE

How wonderful you are!

SHE

And does my adored one like to have me talk to him like this?

HE

That's part of what I wanted you to SAY, but it isn't all.

SHE

What else would my precious have me DO?

HE (*rises*)

Dare I tell you?

SHE

Dare to tell me.

HE

Can't you guess?

SHE (*half doing it*)

I don't know.

HE

Try.

SHE

You want my arms about you? (*She does.*)

HE

That's only part.

SHE

And you want me to hold you close? (*She does.*)

HE

That's another part.

SHE

And you want me to kiss you?

HE

Remember, I didn't ask it—I didn't say it—

SHE

But you do—

HE (*as she kisses him*)

I didn't ask—I didn't ask!—I didn't—

SHE

But you do—and I will—
(*As she does—LIGHTS OUT.*)

FOURTH SCENE—*He enters practically dragging in a woman aged about 28. In this scene he is domineering, brutal and mean.*

SHE

Oh, Robert, I didn't want to leave the dance.

HE

Come and sit down.

SHE

But, Robert dear, I don't want to SIT out the dance.

HE

Did you hear what I said? Come and sit down.

SHE

Why don't you do as I ask?

HE

I am doing as you asked. You know

you really wanted me to come out here with you and sit down. It is the coquette in you that says you don't want to sit out the dance.

SHE

I'm not a coquette.

HE

No? Very well, no.

SHE

No, I am not. I *WILL* sit out the dance if you wish it.

HE

I don't wish it. If you really want to dance, I'll dance. Come along.

SHE

Well—well—
(*Shows she doesn't want to.*)

HE

I thought so.

SHE

You talk as if I was designing.

HE

Designing. Designing. That's the very word. You are.

SHE

You mean to accuse me of putting out traps.

HE (*heatedly*)

My God, but you are clever. You know that is what you do, and so you ask me "do I mean to accuse you" of doing it. Do you know what you women are? Way down deep *all* women are half vampire. You rarely let us be "noble and fine" as you say you want us to be. You never allow us to be ourselves and just human. Nor do you allow us to allow you to be yourself and just human. If we love you and show it, you don't love us; and if we don't love you and show it, you do love us. How few live in a give-and-take, thoughtful, meet-each-other-half-way way? Ask the servants. They will tell you how seldom is there a

50-50 arrangement. It is 49-51, 60-40 or more often 90-10. One loves, the other consents to be loved, and, when you are the 90, as is the more usual, you rule or misrule us and then come bickerings, quarrels, and partings. You make us love patience just as I am doing now.

SHE

Why do you treat me so wretchedly?

HE

Would you call "wretchedly" treating you as you really want me to?

SHE

No, I shouldn't.

HE (*roughly*)

Well, I treat you as you want me to. You don't like being treated sweetly. You like to be treated brutally and so I treat you brutally. If I treated you sweetly, you'd be bored to tears in a minute. I want you to notice one thing most carefully—that is—that I make you do the LITTLE things just as I think they should be done. The reason I do this is that I don't believe the old idea of giving a woman her own way in the little things, and making her do the big things. If you give a woman her way in the little things—since she is unable to see the difference between the little things and the big things, she practically gets her own way in all things. Whereas, if you make her do the little things, when it comes to the big things, since she is unable to tell the difference between the little things and the big things, she will be doing what you want her to do all the time. I know. It is my experience . . .

SHE

And so you think I don't know the difference between the little things and the big things?

HE

Yes, I am sure of it.

SHE

Prove it.

HE

All right, I'll prove it. Stand up, please.

(She stands up, but very hesitatingly, as if she didn't quite understand what he is getting at. She obeys him, nevertheless.)

There, you see, I proved my point. Simply because I asked you to stand up you stood up. You didn't ask yourself why, but merely did it. And now that you are up—put your arms around me.

(She does, still not quite understanding.)

And now that your arms are around me, what are you going to do? You're going to take them away. I'm quite sure you're going to take them away!

SHE

No, I'm NOT going to take them away. I'm going to kiss you—

(She does.)

(LIGHTS OUT.)

FIFTH SCENE—*Spot again. He brings in a girl of 22. She is quite simple and altogether charming. For a moment they look at each other and then, in shy embarrassment, they turn from each other. Finally:*

HE

And so you are Charlie's sister?

SHE

And so you are Charlie's friend?

HE (*still puzzled*)

I didn't know Charlie had a sister until he presented me a half hour ago. He didn't tell me BEFORE. He presents me to you NOW. He thinks I wouldn't dare—

SHE

I don't understand. You wouldn't dare what?

HE (*a pause, a look, a determination*)
To tell you I love you.

SHE

You—love—me—?

HE

Yes—and to hope that you believe me and—love me.

SHE

I believe you and—I—love—you—

HE

And I—love—you—

(They rush toward each other as if to embrace and he suddenly remembers his wager and stops.)

[If such skill may be imagined as existing in a professional actor (and I believe Arnold Daly has it) he must show the audience here that he can't be small enough to allow the woman he loves to kiss him for the sake of winning a thousand dollars—and also that he doesn't want the thousand dollars to come through the woman he loves.]

(She sees his hesitancy and asks:)

SHE

Why did you stop, dear?

HE *(dreaming)*

What, dear?

SHE

Why did you stop?

HE

Because I love you—

SHE

Because you love me!—

HE

Yes, dear!

SHE

But, if you love me—you—will—
LOVE—me!

HE

No, dear, that would be *making* love to you, and when one loves one doesn't
MAKE love, one just—LOVES!

CURTAIN FALLS.

SHE

Why are you so mysterious?

HE

Yes, I know I'm mysterious, but take me on credit, and soon—sooner than you imagine—I shall come back to you. Will you have this faith?

SHE

Yes—dear.

(The lights go out and now she and Robert meet Charlie again on the street as in the beginning. They walk up to Charlie. Robert reaches into his pocket and is about to hand him a check, saying:)

HE

Here, Brother Charlie, is your thousand.

(Then suddenly he remembers and hands the thousand to her, saying:)

HE

Charlie asks me to say that this is his wedding gift to you. And he also says that on the day we are married, he will give an additional thousand to the Belgian Relief Fund.

CHARLIE

What's that?

SHE

Why must he give a thousand to the Belgian Relief Fund?

HE

You want me to tell you why?

SHE

Uh-huh.

HE

What did you want to do in the conservatory?

SHE

Robert!

HE

Tell me and Charlie will understand.

SHE

This *(kisses him)*.

"FOR THE FOLKS BACK HOME"

By Charles Belmont Davis

WITH a great creaking of rusty brakes and a sharp jolt the way train came to a sudden stop and Leslie Wingate awoke from her long, untroubled sleep. Fearful that she had passed her station she quickly raised the blind of the state-room window and found that she was at Milford Junction, which was a good hour's run from her destination. With a sigh of relief she once more nestled her head among the pillows, and, as the train moved on again, with a smile on her pretty lips and in her drowsy eyes, she looked out on the panorama of deserted cotton-fields, heavy sandy roads, and, at great intervals, small clumps of pines sheltering forlorn, weather-beaten farm-houses. A scene desolate enough to the casual traveller, but this was the country where Leslie had been born and where she had spent her childhood and which in her heart she loved. She loved it not only for its memories but from its very contrast to her present life and the place she now called home.

Through the drifting, gray clouds the sun suddenly forced its way and filled the bare, bleak landscape with a wonderful golden haze. With a little cry of pleasure the girl sprang out of bed and began her simple toilet, for when Leslie paid her yearly visit to Dunn's Mills simplicity was the keynote to her clothes as well as to her every thought and act. The dark, blue tailor-dress she had chosen for her journey, the gray and black toque, the strip of fur she wore about her neck were none too good for any girl who worked for her living and lived on her wages. It is true that her black stockings were silk and over her patent-leather slippers she wore gray cloth tops, but

Leslie regarded these slight digressions from simplicity as adjuncts quite necessary to a lady's dress. Besides, she wished to impress the good people of Dunn's Mills that the income of a fairly successful actress permitted one to dress not much better but yet a little better than the average working-girl. Before she had begun to dress Leslie stood for some moments in front of the narrow mirror looking at the towlsed mass of bronze-gold hair and the lovely face of translucent olive skin. With longing eyes she glanced down at the little leather bag that held her vanity box, but, with a sigh, she realized that until she was on the train again on her way back to New York the vanity box and the eye-brow pencil and the cigarette-case must remain locked in the little bag. For ten days Leslie was going to her real home, back to the simple, God-fearing life of Dunn's Mills, where rouge and cigarettes were still regarded as the official emblems of a lost soul.

According to the custom of the family, Leslie's sister, Anne, met her at the station, while her mother remained on duty in the trimming-store at the far end of the village. The meeting between the two girls was more like that of true lovers than of sisters. To Anne Wingate, Leslie was a kind of goddess, a beautiful, perfect being who had gone away from Dunn's Mills because she was altogether too fine and too good for it and it was only because she was so fine and so good that once a year she condescended to return to her birth-place in the role of fairy-godmother. To Leslie, her sister Anne, with her pale, fragile, pink and white beauty, was like some lovely tender flower that had been brought into this world as a

thing of joy and beauty for the rest of the world to love and fuss over and protect. It had been to "do something" for Anne that Leslie had first decided to go to New York and seek employment on the stage. It was to make the money that would free her mother and sister from the daily drudge of the millinery shop that Leslie had remained in New York. It was to help Anne and her mother in their petty business that every year just before Christmas Leslie returned to her home town with two great trunks packed with pretty finery which her mother and Anne, at a great profit, sold to the women of Dunn's Mills. And it was for her sister's sake that Leslie one day had sold her soul and her right to meet good women. At least that was the excuse that Leslie at the time had made to herself and the excuse to which in her occasional hours of emotional remorse she had clung with a passionate intensity.

It so happened that Leslie and Anne were the only passengers in the station 'bus and as they drove down the main street of the village the two girls clasped hands and tears of exquisite pleasure and complete happiness dimmed their eyes. Once more Anne had Leslie, the glory of her life, at her side, and, in the joy of her home-coming, Leslie had entirely forgotten that the world did not end at the outskirts of Dunn's Mills. The lumbering barge rumbled around the corner and at the end of the broad, elm-lined lane Leslie could see the little gray clapboard shop and the figure of her mother standing in the doorway. A few moments before there had been two women customers with Mrs. Wingate, but at the first sounds of the approaching barge they had taken to precipitate flight. The home-coming of Leslie Wingate was a matter of much moment in Dunn's Mills; the day and hour of her return had long been heralded, and it would not have been seemly for even customers to have remained to witness the meeting between the mother and her eldest child. Mrs. Wingate took Leslie into her arms and against her own

withered little body pressed closely the splendid young offspring whose every vein throbbed with health and happiness and the purely animal joy of living. In the open doorway stood Anne, her damp eyes shining with a complete content. What if she did live the life of a drudge and what if her world was limited to the shop and the little cottage across the way. Leslie, of her own volition, had gone out into the great world and had conquered and had faithfully shared her rewards. Surely if ever a prodigal daughter deserved the fatted calf, Anne Wingate, with all her heart believed her sister Leslie to be that daughter.

It was an hour later when the liveryman drew up with Leslie's trunks—the small one that held her own simple wardrobe and the two big ones packed tight with all the lovely, lacey things that she had brought as her contribution to the annual Christmas sale at her mother's shop. In fact Leslie's contribution was the annual sale. Every woman in Dunn's Mills for months saved her pennies against the all-important event and on the opening day the other shop-keepers, for a few hours at least, closed their doors and dropped in at Mrs. Wingate's Millinery Emporium just to see what Leslie had brought from the great city.

Throughout the morning and the afternoon of Leslie's arrival the three women worked unceasingly and by supper-time the big trunks were empty, and their enticing contents displayed to the greatest possible advantage. Mother Wingate closed the door of the shop, and, with her children on either side of her, walked over to her cottage where she knew that she was to enjoy a long, happy evening listening to Leslie tell of her life in the theatre and wonderful tales of the great Metropolis.

For a few months after she had first gone North Leslie had appeared in the chorus of a revue and this brief experience, coupled with the fact that many of her intimates were show-girls, made it comparatively easy for her to talk knowingly about the stage and to

give the impression that she was still of it. However, as the evening wore on Leslie's imagination was put to a very considerable test, as few of the adventures of which she told had of necessity any foundation in fact. And, then, too, it was not always easy to avoid the vernacular of Broadway which came so glibly to her lips, but only once did her mother interrupt her for an explanation.

"Tell me, Leslie dear," Mrs. Wingate asked, "just what you mean when you speak of a stage-mother?"

Leslie was sitting on the floor, tailor-fashion, with her back to the open fire. For a moment she pursed her pretty lips and crinkled her broad clear forehead and then put out her hand and laid it on her mother's.

"A stage-mother," she began slowly, "is the kind of mother who is over-zealous in her daughter's affairs off and on the stage and who lives by grafting on her girl and her girl's men friends. And there are some of these women, although it will seem hard for you to believe, who don't care very much how their daughters earn their money—that is so long as they fetch the best part of it home to mother."

"Am I a stage-mother?" Mrs. Wingate asked.

Leslie smiled up at the older woman and shook her head.

"No, dear," she said; "you're not a stage-mother and never could be."

"But I have a daughter on the stage," Mrs. Wingate protested mildly, "and she does give me a part of her earnings—one way or another—doesn't she?"

"Yes, one way or another," Leslie repeated, "and just as much or little as I choose. And even if it's usually not very much it's the greatest happiness I have. Some of these days I hope to make enough so that you will be able to give up the shop and you and Anne can live in a great, big house and, you can sit by the fire all the day with your hands folded in your lap and Anne—"

"And I," Anne cried, "can go to visit you in New York—very, very often, can't I?"

Leslie felt the hot blood suddenly rush to her face, but trusting to the dim light of the room to protect her she looked towards her sister and forcing a smile to her lips, nodded her head.

"Of course, Anne," she said, "of course. You must pay me long, long visits, dear, and meet all my nice friends and whenever Mother gets tired of her new big home she must come, too."

The conversation was suddenly interrupted by the loud ringing of the door-bell and Anne sprang to her feet. For a moment she hesitated, glancing quickly from her sister to her mother. The girl's usually straightforward, simple manner had suddenly become strained and conscious.

"It must be Tom Bradley," she stammered. "I told him he might come in late, just for a minute, to see Leslie. I'll let him in."

When Anne had left the room, Leslie, with a smile of inquiry, looked up into her mother's eyes which had suddenly taken on a troubled, unhappy look.

"Is Tom a serious suitor?" she asked.

For a moment Mrs. Wingate hesitated.

"I don't know," she said. "Anne has never told me. You must ask her."

Tom Bradley came into the room looking very big and boyish and handsome, and Leslie, springing to her feet, took both his outstretched hands and put up her pretty lips to be kissed. Leslie and Tom were of much the same age; had gone to school and as children had played together and until she had gone North he had taken her to most of the dances and the entertainments at the town hall. To see Tom again was one of the things that Leslie always looked forward to with the greatest pleasure when she returned to Dunn's Mills and it was a tradition that he was allowed to kiss her when he first welcomed her and when he said goodbye.

"And how are things with you, Tom?" Leslie asked when they were all seated about the hearth.

"Simply great," Bradley laughed; "couldn't be better. The old man has got his second wind apparently and he's

making so much money that people claim he has a counterfeiting-plant up in our cellar. I just trail along and take it easy and try to learn how a spendthrift gets rid of his money so that when it does come my way—"

"You do nothing of the kind," Anne interrupted. "You know you work very hard, Tom. Why, Leslie, he's paying-teller at the bank now and vice-president of the land company and has charge of Mr. Bradley's insurance business, and—and all sorts of things."

"All right," Tom laughed, "have it your own way. I'm a hard-working man if you say so. But I didn't come here to talk about myself. I've only got a few minutes to stay and I want to hear Leslie talk."

And, so, for a few minutes, Leslie talked again, but her talk was no longer about New York but of the old days at Dunn's Mills. Tom Bradley was only a boy and an unsophisticated, small-town boy, but for some reason Leslie found it more difficult to invent stories of her supposed life on the stage for the young man's benefit than she had for that of her mother and sister. But it was easy enough to chatter on about the days when she was the undisputed belle of the village, and, therefore, until he took his leave, she and Bradley talked and laughed over the adventures and the romances of their youth.

When Tom had left and their mother had gone to bed the two girls met in Anne's room, which she shared with Leslie, and for the first time that day the sisters were alone.

Anne was combing her hair before the glass and Leslie coming up behind her laid her hands on the younger girl's bare shoulders, and their eyes met in the mirror.

"Tell me all about it?" Leslie said.

"About what?" Anne asked while a pink flush stole over her neck and throat and pale, prett face.

"What about," Leslie laughed, "why, about Tom, of course. Do you love him?"

Still looking into the mirror, Anne nodded her answer.

"And does Tom love you?"

"I think he does. Why, yes, Leslie, I'm sure of it."

Leslie, with her hands still resting on Anne's shoulders turned her sister slowly about until the two girls faced each other.

"Then why aren't you happy about it?" Leslie demanded. "Why don't you laugh or cry tears of happiness? Why don't you throw your arms about your big sister's neck and ask for her blessing? What's the trouble, dear?"

"There's no trouble," Anne said; "that is between Tom and myself. It's Mr. Bradley. Tom says his father thinks he's too young to marry, but I know that's not the real reason."

"What is the real reason?"

For a moment Annie hesitated while she brushed away the twin tears that had forced themselves into her unhappy, despondent eyes.

"It's the trimming-store," she sobbed at last. "Mr. Bradley doesn't think mother and I are good enough. He's always been purse-proud, but since he's made all this money lately he's impossible."

"The old fool," Leslie muttered. "I remember how he hated me when Tom and I used to play around together. But don't worry, Kid; it'll all come right. Tom's a fine boy. Go to bed and have a good sleep. Don't forget tomorrow is the great day of the sale and we must all be up early and looking our best."

Anne did as she was told and in a short time had cried herself into a calm and refreshing sleep. But it was quite different with Leslie. The mattress of the big bed was made of straw and the linen was coarse and she greatly missed the luxury of her own bed in her little apartment in New York. Besides, when she was there she never thought of going to bed before two or three o'clock in the morning and now the clock in the sitting-room was just striking ten. It was futile for her to even try to sleep, and, so, with her hands clasped behind

her head, she lay on her back staring up into the darkness and thinking how very uncomfortable she was. She listened to the even breathing of her sister lying beside her and envied her greatly. But even Anne, sweet, innocent child that she was, Leslie remembered, had her own troubles. What a wonderful thing it would be for Anne and her mother if Anne did marry Tom! Then old man Bradley could do everything that she had planned to do for them. Still staring wide-eyed into the darkness Leslie smiled at the happy prospect. And, then, the question suddenly flashed before her that in case Anne and Tom were married how would it affect her. As the possible consequences flooded her mind her warm young body turned suddenly cold and she closed her eyes and pressed her nails into the palms of her soft, delicate hands. Gradually her mind cleared and from the chaos of her thoughts two or three facts remained as clear to her vision as so many black objects silhouetted against a field of snow. So long as her mother and sister remained where they were and as they were, chained by circumstances to the store and to Dunn's Mills, then she was safe to lead any kind of life that she chose to lead in New York. In all ways the two places were so far apart that even rumour could scarcely carry so great a distance. And supposing that there should be rumours Leslie knew quite well that it would be most difficult, almost impossible, to prove the facts. Indeed, so circumspect had she been that there were still those in New York who knew her and still believed her nothing worse than a virtuous grafter. But even the life of a virtuous grafter who lives luxuriantly on the generosity of rich men is not the kind of life that she could either explain or excuse to her own people or to Tom's father. Indeed, for the first time, Leslie realized that the fact that she was supposed to be on the stage had probably been the most cogent reason for the elder Bradley's refusal to allow his son to marry Anne. With a hopeless sigh Leslie turned and buried

her face in the pillow. Of all her miserable thoughts the one that hurt her most was that all that she had ever done she had done for her sister and her mother. And now it seemed that her sacrifice was not only to go for nothing but was to bring unending unhappiness into their innocent lives. Hot tears of self-pity sprang to her eyes and unrestrained rolled down her cheeks, dampened the hard pillow and added greatly to her discomfort. But at all costs Anne's happiness was in some way to be made secure. Of this Leslie was quite sure and by a constant repetition of the same thought her brain fagged and she gradually fell into a heavy sleep.

The next day was clear and cold—a perfect day for the sale and from early morning until late in the afternoon the bell over Mother Wingate's shop door announced an almost continuous stream of prospective customers. Mrs. Wingate wandered about—that is so far as the limits of the small shop would permit her to wander;—beamed over her steel-rimmed spectacles and gave unintelligible answers to the innumerable questions put to her concerning the goods on sale. Regarding a spool of thread or a paper of pins or even a roll of canton flannel or a skein of wool Mrs. Wingate was an expert, but the diaphanous night-dresses, the lacey combinations and all of the dainty and wonderful lingerie that Leslie had brought from the great city was completely beyond her ken. Anne, too, was somewhat overcome by the importance of the occasion and was rather useless, but it was quite different with Leslie. By instinct she was a natural saleswoman and she had bought much, too much, precious underwear for her own use not to know its value and how to make the most of that value in the eyes of a covetous woman. All of the things had been made in the better class sweatshops in the loft district of New York, but Leslie was prolific in the use of the enchanted words, "imported," "Paris" and "Vienna." For one small, filmy piece of underwear, with her ready pat-

ter, she induced young girls to give up all of their hard-earned savings, but as Leslie herself said, "To wear one garment like that does a world of good to one's self-respect and a pretty girl can never begin too early to collect her trousseau." Before her persuasive arguments young matrons gave up the money that had been entrusted to them to pay the butcher and the grocery man; elderly ladies who had come to buy a lace handkerchief for a Christmas gift, carried away belaced combinations that (at least, so Leslie assured them) would make their husband's eyes "bulge with admiration and delight."

By five o'clock the last remnant of the great white sale had been disposed of and Mrs. Wingate and her two daughters, very tired but very happy, drew up their chairs before the counter, and, in the dim light of two kerosene lamps, proceeded to count the profits of the day. It was while they were still busy over the contents of the bulging cash-box that they received an unexpected visit from Tom Bradley and his father. The boy at once crossed the shop to where the three women sat and greeted them most cordially, but the old man, short, broad, thick-set, glaring under shaggy eyebrows, stood just within the door and with but scant courtesy nodded his salutations.

"I came to see Miss Leslie Wingate," he said. "I had hoped to find her alone."

Leslie at once sprang to her feet.

"Why, that's all right, Mr. Bradley," she said. "If you have something you want to say to me alone we can go over to my mother's house or I can walk with you up the lane."

"Thank you," the old man said, "if you would be so good. A short walk will do."

When Leslie had put on her hat and coat they left the shop and started slowly along the deserted avenue. The sun had sunk behind the hills that encircled the little town and the naked, gnarled limbs of the bared trees that lined the broad lane stood out in bold, black relief against the pink and silver-

gray lights of the dying day. Gusts of a bleak east wind blew sharply in their faces and Leslie pulled her fur collar tightly about her throat and stuck her hands deep in the pockets of her coat. For a few moments in silence they walked slowly along the broad path that served as a side-walk. It was Bradley who spoke first.

"Miss Wingate," he began, "when you were a friend of my son and much in his company I admit that I didn't like you. That is, I didn't like you as the possible wife of my boy. The matter gave me more concern than either of you knew or certainly cared about. All of my life I have worked very hard; Tom is my only child and his future meant everything to me, and, so, when you went away to make your home elsewhere, I was much relieved. I hope that you will pardon my frankness."

"Oh, that's all right," Leslie laughed. "It's better that way, much better for everyone."

"And, now, as you've probably learned," Bradley went on, "Tom wants to marry your sister. I know that Anne is a fine girl. I'm sure of that, and I know of but one obstacle to their marriage."

Leslie looked up calmly into the old man's eyes.

"And the obstacle is?" she asked.

Bradley met the girl's look with eyes in which there was no mercy.

"Yourself," he said. "You have always been a menace to me and mine."

For a few moments there was silence again and when Leslie spoke it was in her usual frank and steady voice.

"When you were afraid that your son was going to marry me," she said, "I can understand why you should not have liked me—I mean as a possible daughter-in-law. But why is it that I am still a menace? Because I work for my living on the stage?"

Once more the old man turned his hard, pitiless eyes on those of the girl.

"It is not so much," he threw back at her, "that you are on the stage as that you are not on it. Rumours about your life in New York had already reached

me here at Dunn's Mills and when Tom told me that he wanted to marry Anne, I took out information about you. I wanted to know just how you got the money to support yourself."

"And did you find out how—what you wanted to know?"

Bradley shook his head. "No," he said, "I wish I had. Because a good-looking woman who lives alone and who has no visible means of support is always under suspicion. Besides, if there is a question about you, there seems to be none concerning your women friends. So far as I can learn they are all thoroughly disreputable. I don't suppose you care to tell me how you do live?"

"No," Leslie said, "I don't care to tell you that, because it would drag in other people—people who have done no wrong and who should be left out of it."

They had been walking very slowly, but now Leslie stopped abruptly and the old man and the girl turned and faced each other. "But there is one thing I will tell you," Leslie went on, "and that is *why* I live as I do live."

Without removing his eyes from those of the girl, Bradley nodded slowly and for a brief moment a grim smile illumined his hard, wrinkled face.

"It is," Leslie said, "to make my mother's life a little happier and to give my sister a chance. That is why I have lived as I have and worked and suffered—to lift those two women out of the daily hardship of their narrow monotonous lives. To give my mother, who, all of her days, has slaved for her children, just a few years of rest and comfort and to help my sister to something better than the drudgery of the store. Don't you think, Mr. Bradley, that that is an ambition worthy of any sacrifice—certainly the sacrifice of a life so little worth while as mine. Because I do. And don't you think that sometimes morals are more or less a question of geography? To be frank, Mr. Bradley, in the East you would be known as a small-town man."

Compared to Leslie, Bradley seemed but little stirred by the girl's defense and now that she was silent again she noticed that a smile still played about his hard, straight lips, but that the pitiless, uncompromising stare of his eyes had given way to a look that was very human and kindly.

"Miss Leslie," he said, "when I was much younger I saw a good deal of women—good and bad—all kinds. I haven't always been so lucky as to be what you call a small-town man. I have known the kind of women who owned their carriages and their sealskin coats and who hung diamond necklaces and such junk around their throats. And I have known the lowest class—poor devils who worked in dance-halls and back-room saloons and such like. But I found that both kinds—all kinds—had generally one trait in common, and it usually broke out in the sordid, early-morning hours when the talk had become personal and maudlin. The lie they told, and pretty much all of them told the same lie, was to excuse their present social position. They claimed they were what they were just because they had believed it their duty to do 'something for poor mother' or 'for little sister' or 'for just the folks back there.' According to their philosophy it was all right so long as the folks back there didn't know the truth and reaped the reward, and so long as it was only the daughter who had sinned that suffered. That's the excuse that the most of them give—the lie they're forever telling themselves. Of course, it's all right if the folks who are decent, hard-working, God-fearing people never know. But suppose one of these days they do know? Does the Spring hat that sister got or the fur coat that came to mother for a Christmas gift or the box of cigars for the old man make up for the loss of their child? Because she's worse than lost to her own people—they'd be glad to see her dead. But she's not dead. She goes on living and the only difference is that she no longer sends them the Spring hat nor the fur coat, nor the box of cigars

and they go on living and bearing the real burden of her shame."

"And supposing that that is all true," Leslie asked, "what does it possibly prove in my own case?"

"The proof," Bradley said, "must come from you. Do you really want to serve your sister and your mother?"

Leslie shrugged her shoulders, and, with a mirthless smile, nodded her assent.

"Then you must promise me," the old man said very slowly and with the solemnity of a judge pronouncing a sentence, "never to return to New York. You must settle down in your mother's home and work in your mother's store. If you do this I will give my consent to my boy's marriage with your sister."

Their eyes met, and, for a few moments, held each other in a steady, calm regard. But when Leslie started to speak, the old man shook his head and laid his pudgy hand on her soft arm.

"Not now, Miss Leslie," he said, "not now. Take a little time to decide, sleep over it anyhow. It's no ordinary sacrifice I'm asking you. It's a regular renunciation. I know—as I told you just now, I haven't always been a small-town man."

"Thank you," Leslie said, smiling into Bradley's now greatly troubled eyes. "I'll give you my answer to-morrow. Good-night, Mr. Bradley."

The old man took the girl's outstretched hand. For a moment he pressed it hard in his own, and, then, with an awkward bow but no further words, hurried away.

Tom Bradley came to supper that night and it turned out to be a particularly bright and joyous occasion. The very air seemed charged with happiness and hope and fair promises. At an early hour Mother Wingate discreetly retired and left the young people to themselves and shortly afterwards Leslie followed her mother's tactful example. Once in her bedroom she locked the door, lighted the fire, and quickly taking off her waist and skirt put on a rose-colored silk wrapper of which she

was very fond and which she knew to be extremely becoming to her exquisite, splendid beauty. Then she went to her trunk and having found her reticule took from it her vanity box, an eye-brow pencil and her cigarette case. For a few moments she stood before the old-fashioned looking-glass while she darkened her eyebrows, deftly heightened the color of her cheeks and turned the pretty lips from delicate pink to the scarlet of a Beauty rose. Having for some time, with smiling satisfaction, regarded her loveliness in the mirror, Leslie crossed the room and sat on the edge of a low chair before the hearth. With her elbows resting on her knees and her chin between her palms she remained gazing steadfastly at the flames that shot upwards from the crackling logs. But Leslie saw much more than dancing scarlet flames, glowing embers and charred logs. She saw another fireplace surrounded by old, Dutch tiles. It was at the far end of a wonderfully cozy sitting-room with gray and silver walls and the curtains and the furniture in the room were all of rose-colored silk not unlike the dressing-gown she now wore. Through the two French windows the sunshine streamed and filled the place with a golden haze and all about the room there were palms and ferns in brass and copper bowls and many vases filled with white and pink and scarlet roses. Beyond the gray and silver room there was a white bedroom with a great low bed that had once belonged to the favourite of an emperor. Across the bed was stretched a coverlet woven of thread of gold and the linen was as soft as eiderdown and as fine as the wings of a butterfly. From every window of these rooms one could see myriads of many coloured lights and the air was filled with the sounds of joyous laughter and sensuous music and from every quarter pleasant voices were always calling one to join in the exotic pleasures of a great city.

Turning her head, Leslie glanced slowly about the room in which she now sat until her eyes rested on the bed

in the corner with its hard mattress and coarse linen. With a weary little sigh she pulled herself out of her chair, went over to the bureau and collected her vanity box, the eye-brow pencil and her cigarette case. These she carried back to the hearth, and, one by one dropped them into the fire where the points of flame rose the highest. One more smiling glance in the mirror at the painted, pretty face, and, then, with

the help of some ice-cold water which she had poured from a cracked pitcher she washed away the last remnant of rouge. Slowly she finished her preparations for the night, and, having unlocked the door, climbed into the high unyielding bed. With a slight shudder Leslie laid her cheek against the hard pillow, and, her tired, bruised mind refusing to work longer, she fell into a deep slumber.



URANIA IN AMBUSH

By William Rose Benét

V EILED by the dreaming hours
Of ease, her face is seen
The flower of perfect flowers,
Dim through the willows' green.

But Love, that most yearns toward her,
Hath many a groan and tear
That Earth is out her border,
Her kingdom is not here.

Swift transient rapture of her
Two hearts in tune may win.
The moment ends, the lover
Sighs,—and the world roars in.

Yet, after hope's rejection
Of hope, and long delays,
A man may meet perfection
Upon the bitterest days.

When neither pipe nor tabor
Could bring the perfect hour,
Through long duress and labor
A man may know her power.

Suddenly overtakes him
Such joy as made the skies.
Wild beauty storms and shakes him.
Delight is in his eyes

More piercing, for its fleetness,
More poignant, for his pain,
Than highest Heaven's completeness
May ever bring again.

THE EXILES' CLUB

By Lord Dunsany

IT was an evening party; and something someone had said to me had started me talking about a subject that to me is full of fascination, the subject of old religions, forsaken gods. The truth (for all religions have some of it), the wisdom, the beauty, of the religions of countries to which I travel have not the same appeal for me; for one only notices in them their tyranny and intolerance, and the abject servitude that they claim from thought; but when a dynasty has been dethroned in heaven, and goes forgotten and outcast even among men, one's eyes, no longer dazzled by its power, find something very wistful in the faces of fallen gods, suppliant to be remembered, something almost tearfully beautiful, like a long, warm summer twilight fading gently away after some day memorable in the story of earthly wars. Between what Zeus, for instance, has been once and the half-remembered tale he is to-day there lies a space so great that there is no change of fortune known to man whereby we may measure the height down which he has fallen. And it is the same with many another god at whom once the ages trembled and the twentieth century treats as an old wives' tale. The fortitude that such a fall demands is surely more than human.

Some such things as these I was saying, and being upon a subject that much attracts me, I possibly spoke too loudly; certainly I was not aware that, standing close behind me, was no less a person than the ex-King of Eretivaria, the thirty islands of the East, or I would have moderated my voice and moved away a little to give him more room. I was not aware of his presence

until his satellite, one who had fallen with him into exile but still revolved about him, told me that his master desired to know me: and so, to my surprise, I was presented, though neither of them even knew my name. And that was how I came to be invited by the ex-King to dine at his club.

At the time I could only account for his wishing to know me by supposing that he found in his own exiled condition some likeness to the fallen fortunes of the gods of whom I talked unwitting of his presence; but now I know that it was not of himself he was thinking when he asked me to dine at that club.

The club would have been the most imposing building in any street in London, but in that obscure, mean quarter of London in which they had built it it appeared unduly enormous. Lifting right up above those grotesque houses and built in that Greek style that we call Georgian, there was something Olympian about it. To my host an unfashionable street could have meant nothing; through all his youth wherever he had gone had become fashionable the moment he went there: words like the East End could have had no meaning to him.

Whoever built that house had enormous wealth and cared nothing for fashion, perhaps despised it. As I stood gazing at the magnificent upper windows draped with great curtains, indistinct in the evening, on which huge shadows flickered, my host attracted my attention from the doorway, and so I went in and met for the second time the ex-King of Eritivaria.

In front of us a stairway of rare

marble led upwards; he took me through a side-door and downstairs, and we came to a banqueting hall of great magnificence. A long table ran up the middle of it, laid for quite twenty people, and I noticed the peculiarity that instead of chairs there were thrones, for everyone except me, who was the only guest and for whom there was an ordinary chair. My host explained to me when we all sat down that everyone who belonged to that club was by rights a king.

In fact, none was permitted, he told me, to belong to the club until his claim to a kingdom, made out in writing, had been examined and allowed by those whose duty it was. The whim of a populace or the candidate's own misrule were never considered by the investigators; nothing counted with them but heredity and lawful descent from kings; all else was ignored. At that table there were those who had once reigned themselves, others lawfully claimed descent from kings that the world had forgotten, the kingdoms claimed by some had even changed their names. Hatzgurh, the mountain king, is almost regarded as mythical.

I have seldom seen greater splendour than that long hall provided below the level of the street. No doubt by day it was a little sombre, as all basements are, but at night, with its great crystal chandeliers, and the glitter of heirlooms that had gone into exile, it surpassed the splendour of palaces that have only one king. They had come to London suddenly, most of those kings or their fathers before them, or forefathers; some had come away from their kingdoms by night, in a light sleigh, flogging the horses, or had galloped clear with morning over the border; some had trudged roads for days from their capital in disguise; yet many had had time just as they left to snatch up some small thing without price in markets, for the sake of old times, as they said, but quite as much, I thought, with an eye to the future. And there these treasures glittered on that long

table in the banqueting hall of the basement of that strange club. Merely to see them was much, but to hear their story that their owners told was to go back in fancy to epic times on the romantic border of fable and fact, where the heroes of history fought with the gods of myth. The famous silver horses of Gilgianza were there climbing their sheer mountain, which they did by miraculous means before the time of the Goths. It was not a large piece of silver, but its workmanship outrivalled the skill of the bees.

A yellow Emperor had brought out of the East a piece of that incomparable porcelain that had made his dynasty famous, though all their deeds are forgotten; it had the exact shade of the right purple.

And there was a little golden statuette of a dragon stealing a diamond from a lady; the dragon had the diamond in his claws, large and of the first water. There had been a kingdom whose whole constitution and history were founded on the legend, from which alone its kings had claimed their right to the sceptre, that a dragon stole a diamond from a lady. When its last king left that country, because his favourite general used a peculiar formation under the fire of artillery, he brought with him the little ancient image that no longer proved him a king outside that singular club.

There was the pair of amethyst cups of the turbaned King of Foo, the one that he drank from himself, and the one that he gave to his enemies; eye could not tell which was which.

All these things the ex-King of Eritivaria showed me, telling me a marvellous tale of each; of his own he had brought nothing, except the mascot that used once to sit on the top of the radiator of his favourite motor.

I have not outlined a tenth of the splendour of that table; I had meant to come again and examine each piece of plate and make notes of its history; had I known that this was the last time I should wish to enter that club I should have looked at its treasures more

attentively; but now as the wine went round and the exiles began to talk I took my eyes from the table and listened to strange tales of their former state.

He that has seen better times has usually a poor tale to tell; some mean and trivial thing has been his undoing; but they that dined in that basement had mostly fallen like oaks on nights of abnormal tempest, had fallen mightily and shaken a nation. Those who had not been kings themselves, but claimed through an exiled ancestor, had stories to tell of even grander disaster, history seeming to have mellowed their dynasty's fate as moss grows over an oak a great while fallen. There were no jealousies there, as so often there are among kings; rivalry must have ceased with the loss of their navies and armies; and they showed no bitterness against those that had turned them out, one speaking of the error of his Prime Minister by which he had lost his throne as "poor old Friedrich's heaven-sent gift of tactlessness."

They gossip pleasantly of many things, the tittle-tattle we all had to know when we were learning history, and many a wonderful story I might have heard, many a sidelight on mysterious wars, had I not made use of one unfortunate word. That word was "upstairs."

The ex-King of Eritivaria having pointed out to me those unparalleled heirlooms to which I have alluded, and many more besides, hospitably asked me if there was anything else that I would care to see; he meant the pieces of plate that they had in the cupboards, the curiously graven swords of other princes, historic jewels, legendary seals; but I who had had a glimpse of their marvellous staircase, whose balustrade

I believed to be solid gold, and wondering why in such a stately house they chose to dine in the basement, mentioned the word "upstairs." A sacrilegious hush came down on the whole assembly, the hush that might greet levity in a cathedral.

"Upstairs!" he gasped. "We cannot go upstairs."

I perceived that what I had said was an ill-chosen thing. I tried to excuse myself, but knew not how.

"Of course," I muttered, "members may not take guests upstairs."

"Members!" he said to me. "We are not the members!"

There was such reproof in his voice that I said no more. I looked at him questioningly, perhaps my lips moved, I may have said, "What are you?" A great surprise had come on me at their attitude.

"We are the waiters," he said.

That I could not have known; here at least was honest ignorance that I had no need to be ashamed of; the very opulence of their table denied it.

"Then who are the members?" I asked.

Such a hush fell at that question, such a hush of genuine awe, that all of a sudden a wild thought entered my head, a thought strange and fantastic and terrible. I gripped my host by the wrist and hushed my voice.

"Are they, too, exiles?" I asked.

Twice as he looked in my face he gravely nodded his head.

I left that club very swiftly indeed, never to see it again, scarcely pausing to say farewell to those menial kings; and as I left the door a great window opened far up at the top of the house and a flash of lightning streamed from it and killed a dog.



SATAN finds women for idle men to marry.



FROM THE LOVE LETTERS OF —

By Lucie Lacoste

I

I AM trying to forget you so I keep singing a song, murmuring it softly, quietly: "When you look to the blue, the blue, the real blue sky above you, long not for a strip of gold or the passionate glow of sunrise—"
But alas! my song ends abruptly, for you were my strip of gold. And I lack the breath to continue, so I brush a tear away and my hand loosens the waist baring my neck to the wind. While with the tip of my feet I swing the hammock back through space and watch the red and white awning rippling gently in the breeze.

II

So! You are tired of singing your song and have come to me for repose. Wearily your steps lag, your basket of flowers looks heavy. Your violets are drooped and withered.
Your eyes no longer smile, your lips are set and silent. You are tired of singing your song and have come to me for repose.
No! No! My friend, pass on, pass on.

Why do you stand there wearily moaning a melody, singing it into the dying red light of the setting sun. Looking at me like through an open window,
I tell you, pass on, pass on.

III

To you!
Who swept over the beach of my soul with the might of an ocean in storm, tearing and shifting all the sand, and placidly swept back again to your eternal depth.
To you!
Who lifted me up to a mountain where all was sunny gold, then shook the earth from under my feet and left me to tumble fathoms and fathoms through space alone.
To you!
My infinite horizon.
To you!
My eternal twilight.

IV

As the mountains holding their summits aloft seem to be continually listening to the voice of God, so does my soul continually listen for your call. And I grow no wearier than they. Yet I know that you have no more need of me than the firmament has need of an extra star.

V

An April day—a day that bursts with gladness.

I hear a voice within me singing,—“Do not weep for an unfulfilled desire, for with time it shall fade far back in your memory, become vague, vague and indistinct as the outlines of a tree in a dense fog.

VI

Sometimes when I have smiled, my hands I've held and pressed against my heart, that you might not hear the sob.—And you, laughingly, carelessly, talked on.

VII

Softly you whispered, called me your Sweetheart.

Night turned to day. Rose pink tinted the sky.

Rose pink tinted the room. Happy rose flooded my whole soul.

You caressed me—just like a breeze—and I laughed, a low, happy laugh.

Somewhere in the Infinite it was heard.

Out of the impenetrable darkness a shriek pierced the vast night; some wild animal caught in a trap, moaned; lightning, with ferocity, slashed through the sky. It flashed into the room.

Darkness.

I trembled.

Who was so fiercely jealous of our love?

VIII

Purity has value only when, like a flower that has weathered a heavy rainstorm, it lifts its head, shakes off the drops of rain and laughs with the sun.

IX

I always know when you are near.—When you are near the line of the horizon closes in about me,—almost within touching distance.

X

I am as the swimmer who swims in the great ocean. He knows that no matter how well he swims he can never reach the other shore; and I know I can never touch the other shore of your heart.

But as a swimmer enjoys the water near the shore,—for each breaker is part of the great sea,—so the little I possess of you is part of the big You and I joy that that little of so much is mine.

XI

The wind it weeps, whirls, wails, bangs at my window with a persistency of a pursued soul, it rattles the glass—begging admission.

I open the window, it whirls in the room, sweeps all my papers, opens my books, upsets my flowers, spills the water, which trickles down sadly, slowly and drops on the carpet. While on the table in a sea of water my daffodils are floating.

I close the window. Look on the havoc.

Smile—with just such a whirl your soul met mine.

THE INITIATION

By Mrs. Cheever-Meredith

WHEN the landaulette stopped before the house in Sloan street, Patricia left it with a sense of lassitude, bored by the intruding thought that the days were all growing strangely alike, and that it was increasingly difficult to whip up an interest in matters which no longer owed any charm to imagination.

And for the first time since they had come up to town, she thought of her father, and of what the weeks were meaning to him.

She knew that he hated doing the season, yet that for as far back as she could remember he had come to London with her mother each year for May and June.

When the man opened the door of the house, she asked at once if her mother had returned. No. Then the landaulette was to go once more to the house in the next street which she had just left and wait there.

The man ran lightly down the stone steps to give her instructions to the chauffeur as she stood in the hall looking through a room at her right and at a closed door, still oddly obsessed by the thought of her father. She knew that it was not his habit to be at home at that hour, but that if he were, he would be here in that inner room.

After a moment of hesitation she went and opened his door very softly, peeping in, standing as if irresolute, uncertain whether to disturb him or not.

For, he was there, in that little den which he had made his own as soon as they had taken possession of the house, going there to read and to write his letters. The girl was shocked to re-

call that this was the first time she had sought him since they had come to London unless with the object of asking a favor. She had never made an intimate friend of her father. She had thought him a moral snob who preferred his own faults to those of others, and she had felt, often and instinctively, that he judged her beautiful mother harshly merely because they differed in nature.

He was sitting very quietly beside his writing table, and Patricia saw that he was unoccupied. She wondered, for the first time, if he were not lonely. Shut in, isolated, by reason of the great reserve of his nature, what had he in common with the sensuous pleasures of these weeks of a London season?

She slipped softly into the room, and meeting his look of surprise with a friendly little nod, she sank with a tired sigh into the big leather chair opposite his.

"What's up, Pat?"

"Nothing."

"Want anything?"

"No."

She knew that being satisfied as to these things he would be puzzled to explain her presence, but both relapsed into silence. Suddenly her heart warmed to him. It seemed to her that she enveloped him with the glow of her affection, that it was a physical thing which he must feel like a warm wave. Sitting there, without another word, she seemed to make herself his companion in the intimacy which she had always found to be so difficult to establish.

She heard the man return to the house and close the door, and then the quiet of the place remained unbroken

for a while save by the slight rustle of the silk lining of her waist as she breathed. The stillness seemed a thing which she had entered, but which belonged to her father.

"I say, Father, how jolly still it is here! Do you like it so dull?"

"I don't find it dull at the moment," said he with a smile.

Patricia had always disliked his smile. She thought it hideous, a grimace which approached a leer, and even as a child she had wondered at it. Yet then, as she watched him, she asked herself if pain could have had anything to do with its strange quality. She had seen a portrait that day which had reminded her of her father because of the smile which had distorted the face to which a rose was held with an air of mockery, although the wicked eyes seemed wet with tears. The resemblance had struck her at once.

She recalled the history of the portrait, that of a comedian, who, after having played his part in a burlesque, had carried the rose some one had thrown him to a grave, and there shot himself.

Somehow the memory of the story and of the painted face seemed to plead for the smile she had so disliked, to explain it.

Yes. Pain, stubborn, long borne, might give a smile like that to a human face. But what possible pain had her father? A secret pain? No. She was certain of that.

Yet the look, the expression, of the two faces was the same. Both had the same hideous smile.

Suddenly she spoke. She told him of the portrait, of its realism, using glibly the jargon of the artistic world, of which, however, she knew little.

"And, Father, he—the man—looked like you. Not as handsome—but like."

Her father laughed his dry little laugh which the girl liked so much better than his smile. Far from being hurt, he seemed flattered to have been in her thoughts at all.

She toyed with the roses at the waist line of her frock. "Yet—somehow—

I couldn't fancy you—with a rose—holding it with such a sentimental air."

"No?"

"Nor dying for—or of—love."

"You are right, Pat."

He said this with the air which had always estranged the girl, that of having no real interest in her little attempts to make conversation with him.

"I think you must always have been far more interested in hunting than in love, Father. Even when young—"

Again she heard his low laugh, this time with a note of cynicism which reminded her of his smile. He seemed indisposed for any argument about the matter, and made no comment upon her surmise. He waited as if anticipating that she was about to disclose some further analysis of his character, but she seemed to consider her portraiture of him sufficiently developed, and that she was occupied with thoughts of another become apparent when she added, as if half to herself:

"As for Captain Rattray—"

Her father looked toward her with a slow turning of the head, and a certain air of cautious observation. As she remained silent, he asked after a moment of waiting:

"What about Rattray?"

Patricia became evasive. She spoke slowly as if considering her words. "I suppose every girl—in her first season—thinks a heap about the men she meets."

"A sort of weeding out process, eh?"

The girl laughed self-consciously. "But some she keeps."

Her father asked in a low voice which gave no hint of any lack of interest: "And you are keeping—Rattray?"

Patricia blushed in a ravishing way. "I—I find him charming—and—the Mater—" She hesitated.

The man raised his hand suddenly as if to finger his mustache. "Yes?"

"She seems to wish me to like him."

"Does she?"

"She has him here more than any of the other men. Haven't you noticed it?"

"Yes."

"Everywhere we go—he goes. Isn't it so?"

"Yes."

"We seem to—use him. I say—it's really a bit thick—unless he's very willing to have it so." Patricia looked down at her flowers, and as she did so, she closed her lips in a curious way not unlike a facial trick she disliked in her father.

"He lets himself in for it," was his comment.

The lips which had been set in such firm way flickered into a sly little smile. "I do like him—rather."

The face of her companion was expressionless, yet he seemed to watch her with an intentness which demanded her secret at a moment when he was guarding his own.

Her cheeks were still flushed, her mouth trembling with nervousness, and she pulled at her gloves in an embarrassed way, removing them, and softly smoothing their creases with her pretty slim fingers. She was hurt because her father seemed so unresponsive to her unusual confidences. For she felt that she had told him more than lay in the mere words.

After a moment she asked shyly: "Don't you like him, Father?"

He made no reply, but arose to his feet and with an absent-minded air went to a window and stood looking out into the warm, yet subdued, light of the late afternoon. He seemed oblivious of her question, and she believed that he had relapsed into one of his moods of estrangement, during which he always had appeared to be far removed from her and all that concerned her. She felt this with a sense of relief. He had not understood all that she had believed herself to have revealed, had perhaps forgotten her presence, and had returned to the absorption in himself in which she had found him.

Yet she felt a new contentment in being with him, and no sense of having been dismissed, so she waited happily enough until he should return to her in thought once more.

Finally he asked without turning away from the window: "Your mother returned with you?"

"No. We missed each other. We were to have met at Lady Walling's. She wasn't there. There was such a crush—I saw no one I knew—so I didn't wait. It seemed a useless fag. I sent the landaulette back for her."

Her father walked slowly toward her until he stood beside her. "So you weren't together—you changed your plans?"

"Yes. She suddenly remembered that she had a fitting at Jane's. She dropped me at a picture show and went on alone. She's going to get me those studs, Father."

"I—I wanted to get them for you myself." He turned from her and walked about the room restlessly.

Seeing that her father was annoyed, Patricia concluded that he was displeased because she had been allowed to go about town unchaperoned. She said loyally: "It was perfectly all right, Father, or the Mater wouldn't have left me."

As he remained silent, she continued the defence she fancied herself called upon to make. "She's a dear, Father. Other mothers seem to find it a great bore when their daughters grow up and go about with them, but she enjoys having me."

"That's quite true," he replied pleasantly.

Patricia continued as if thinking to gratify him with her admission: "I think that she is my ideal of what a woman ought to be."

"That is what you ought to feel," he said quietly.

"I suppose most girls feel they've found the ideal man when they marry," she mused. And she seemed to ask a question with the words, and with her eyes. "As for me, I am certain to believe it."

"Few men are fitted for that rôle. But a woman learns to be merciful, Pat."

"Oh," chirped the girl, "if I draw a blank, I'll take it without a yelp."

But the words were spoken as if with the triumphant certainty of an escape from such a disaster.

Her father continued, speaking in a serious tone, and as if expressing thoughts with which he had been long familiar. "Yet the disillusion of an individual here and there signifies nothing. The man or woman who preserves their belief in the ideal marriage needn't despair if their particular adventure prove a failure."

Patricia regarded him wonderingly, struck by his air of anxiety. "I'm afraid I shall judge marriage itself by my own," she said.

"Better a thousand unhappy marriages than one lost ideal in the heart of a girl like you," he continued with the same wistful look at her.

It seemed almost as if he were apologizing, appealing to her, unconsciously to himself. At any rate he was unusually interested in her chatter. She felt that they had become intimate, confidential for the first time since she had grown up, and that he was losing nothing of the meanings which lay between the light words she had spoken so impulsively as to the growing intimacy of the family with young Captain Ratt-ray. But why did he concern himself as to the subject of lost ideals? In what way was the matter apropos?

After considering this she said very sweetly, and with her pretty shy manner: "I could never love a man you didn't like."

His face flushed with pleasure. "I wish you were coming with me on Saturday."

"You are leaving us?" she asked with surprise.

"Only for a few days. I'm going to Ireland." He turned toward some letters which were lying upon the table. "I've heard from a chap who has a hunter to sell."

He had the sheepish air a man wears when he knows that he is about to expose himself to the gibes of his family.

Patricia took advantage of it. "What! Another hunter?" she cried.

"Yes," he admitted.

There was a stir in the hall, a door opened and shut, a voice questioned and

was answered, and then they heard some one go up the stairs.

"There's the Mater!" cried the girl. "And she has my studs! She said she'd stop for them!" She jumped to her feet and ran to the door. There she paused to ask: "Aren't you coming up for some tea?"

"You haven't had yours?"

"Not I! I merely spoke to Lady Walling, and came on here. And my lunch is dead in me, as your Irish friends say. I'm famished."

He looked at his letters, and hesitated. "I must answer one of these. Then I'll come." He offered her an envelope. "Here, Pat—those stalls. At the last moment they've sent them."

The girl took them. "That's jolly fine! And you?"

"I? I'm going to no end of places, but I'll run in and see you during the evening."

She smiled, and leaving him, went on up the stairs to the smaller drawing room where she knew that she should find her mother. The room suggested the older woman and not the girl, who had not the way of impressing herself upon her environment which was so characteristic of her mother. In a hut or in a palace the woman of such a pronounced charm turns round and round very much as an animal does within its lair, until the place takes on her personality as twigs and grasses are bent.

"My studs!" cried Patricia as she entered the room, pretending an exaggerated eagerness and clasping her hands before her like a child.

"I have them," said her mother. "Don't be such a goose, Pat!"

"But I must see them!" And she tried to seize the embroidered bag which still hung upon the arm of her mother.

She was laughingly resisted. "No—not now! Wait, I tell you!"

"But why?" wheedled the girl.

The other woman hesitated. "Oh, I've my reasons! You must wait! They're at the very bottom of the bag, and it's quite full." She looked at Patricia with a strange expression of in-

decision, hesitated, then added: "Only till after tea—then I'll give them to you. There, now! Be good, Pat!"

"I say, Mater, you're jolly obstinate! But you're a dear to get them at all, so I'll wait if you like." She wondered if her mother was not about to surprise her with some other trinkets, as she was very spoiled in such matters.

The mother went on in her pretty, deliberate way: "Sorry, but I seem to have missed you." She seemed pre-occupied.

"Didn't you go to Lady Walling's at all?"

"Oh, I went. But you weren't there, so I came on home." She busied herself with the things upon the tea table. "You haven't had tea? Nor I."

"Why were you so late, Mater?"

"Oh, it was Jane's fault. She kept me waiting." She murmured as if to herself: "Such a fag!"

"You look done up."

"The place was so hot and stuffy. You know what it's like."

Patricia wondered why her mother seemed to watch the door as if she expected some one to appear, and thought that she was thinking of her father.

"He's coming up for tea," she said.

"Who?" asked the other in a startled way, narrowing her eyes to look at her.

"Father, of course. He's in his room."

"Oh, he's here?"

The girl took the caddy from her. "I say—let me do that. You rest a little."

"Such a good child," murmured the woman, as she watched her daughter measure the fragrant dried leaves, and pour the boiling water upon them. "Now, go and sit down. We'll let it steep a bit, and then I'll give you your cup."

After helping herself to some sandwiches the young girl settled herself comfortably among the cushions of a chaise longue, where she ate with the appetite of a gamin, and at the same time fell to admiring her exquisite mother. She thought her the prettiest woman in London. She seemed very pale with the warmth of the day, and

her lips were just a trifle too red in the white of her face. She appeared to be listening again, as if waiting for some sound which she knew would soon intrude upon the quiet of the house.

Finally she gave a purring little exclamation, and her graceful, nervous hands flickered here and there about the table. She lifted the teapot, and a sparkling stream of amber-coloured liquid filled the circle of a delicate porcelain cup.

At this moment a young man entered the room with the smiling aplomb of one who is certain of his welcome.

After greeting the mother of Patricia in a rather pronouncedly formal manner, and recalling with a jest something which had been said as he parted with them the previous evening at the opera, he carried the cup of tea to the girl, seating himself beside her with a charming air of good fellowship, amused perhaps by her new shyness, and her sensitive flush. From where he sat he looked with bold laughing eyes straight into those of his hostess, a daring gaze full of all sorts of unspoken things. Both seemed strangely exhilarated.

"Pat and I missed each other this afternoon. She has been running all over town alone," exaggerated that lady composedly. "Here, Ratty, this is for you."

Captain Rattray crossed the space which separated him from the tea table, and took the cup which she offered.

"Pity! How was that?"

"I was detained—at Jane's."

"So—you were at Jane's!" He turned to Patricia. "Expect you were no end chaffed, eh? Going about without your mother, and all that?"

The girl looked from one to the other. "Oh, I say, amuse yourselves with nothing! I only wish I could!"

It seemed to her that, in some way which she did not understand, Captain Rattray was ragging her mother, and that the latter was warning him with lifted eyebrows, and various grimaces, to desist. It occurred to the girl that he was appearing unaccountably stupid.

Thinking that she heard a footstep,

she looked toward the door in time to see her father enter the room, a quiet figure with a haughtily held head, yet always with that suggestion of a strangely contradictory humility, always with that look of secret things in the eyes so deeply set in the pallor of his face.

After a careless greeting for their guest, he made some jesting remark to his wife as he went to her for his tea.

Captain Rattray arose and approached the table, and for some moments the three tossed an inconsequential ball of chat from one to the other. They spoke of an afternoon at Ranelagh, of a luncheon invitation and the box which would enable her mother and herself to go to Epsom for the Derby, of some enclosure vouchers for Ascot, and of those they should meet in the Club tent, casually planning for pleasures in which she was to share. The girl, listening, mentally reviewed those graceful, elegantly costumed, discreetly painted women, all more or less so like her mother; and those men with their immobile faces, their impenetrable reserve, yet furtive searching glances, who were in a way represented by the two before her. The thing which she knew as the World puzzled her. She was impressed by a sense of intricacy, of mystery.

Smiling, curious as to it all, she became ill at ease upon recalling her recent confidences with her father in regard to the young man who seemed singularly removed from her to-day, and whom she fancied amusing himself with a something in the situation which escaped her.

Her father turned to her. "So, you won't come to Ireland with me, Pat?"

Her mother cried out in surprise: "What! You would run away with Pat—in the midst of her first season?"

"Oh, I say—a disaster, that!" exclaimed Captain Rattray, gallantly.

Her father stood looking down at her with the smile she so disliked, his back turned toward those at the tea table, when Patricia saw the younger man take some small object from his breast

pocket and offer it to her mother. Through the awkwardness of one or the other, it fell to the floor, and she saw that it was a tiny velvet box. She suddenly realized that it contained the studs which she had been told were in the bag which at that moment hung upon the arm of the chair.

Not as yet grasping the significance which she was later to attach to the episode, she was astonished to see the sudden flush which stained the face of her mother. Something of her bewilderment must have attracted the attention of her father, for he turned with a cynical air to see Captain Rattray gracefully recover the box, and, ignorant of the value of the scene he had himself created, place it upon the table beside his hostess.

"Sorry. Awkward—very—" he drawled in his lazy pleasant voice.

Then as he observed something inexplicable in her manner he became intent, puzzled as to any explanation of it, but he replied with his usual easy nonchalance to the affectedly careless little speeches made with assumed composure by the languid woman, who, as she sipped her tea, considered the explanation she should offer later to Patricia as to her lie in regard to her possession of the studs.

The girl sat in growing bewilderment.

Although dazed by a looming terror of that which was forcing itself upon her mind, she preserved that outward semblance of composure which was an inheritance.

Obviously Captain Rattray had been with her mother that afternoon during the interval between the hour in which they had parted and that in which they had met at home. Well, what of that? The two had been together. But there was nothing unusual in the fact.

Then why had the young man greeted her as if for the first time that day? And why had she made the same silly pretence? Had they agreed upon this before he came. Then why?

Suddenly she was chilled by the recollection that her mother had lied to her. She saw that she had expected to re-

cover the studs secretly—that she had known that Captain Rattray was coming there for tea.

So he had been with her when she bought the jewels. He had thrust them into his breast pocket, and had forgotten to give them to her when they parted. Or—

An idea obsessed her only to be violently rejected. Impossible!

Oh, it would all be explained! It would be explained in some very simple way.

No. For there was the lie—the lie of a woman who scorned lying, yet who had been in this instance actuated by some subtle need to conceal—to deceive. Why had it seemed so instinctive a thing to do?

It had been a stupid and futile lie. If it were not for the lie she would never have suspected—never have dreamed—her mother—

Obscure things tormented her—things which she found difficult to name. Memories—of words—of looks—of silences—of broken sentences, the meanings of which had always escaped her.

And their laughter to-day when they met for tea in her presence! Oh, that laughter!

She felt very faint. Realizing that no emotion must at that moment be revealed by her, she was seized by a horrible fear that her mother might read in her face all that she was suspecting—might understand that she knew.

That must never be.

She felt that she should die of shame if her mother were to know that she realized the truth.

She sank further back into her cushions, resting her head upon them as if entirely at ease. She asked and answered foolish questions. She was amazed at the natural sound of her own voice, and was conscious that her mother regarded her with a growing relief.

As if in some trance, she boldly watched the three people whose personalities had become illumined by the ugly glare of a chance revelation.

She was astonished to find that her hand was so steady, and stared at the

cup which she lifted with her icy fingers as if in some way it might be about to break into pieces like all else in her small world of girlish dreams and beliefs.

Captain Rattray took it from her with his air of thoughtful attention which she had always felt to be so unassumingly perfect—that cup which alone of all things remained unaltered. He seemed to have no idea of his part in her initiation, but, she reflected, he was probably cursing his awkwardness in dropping the box, and was perhaps wondering how her mother would explain their silly pretence of not having met earlier in the afternoon. He could not know that she had complicated the task by the lie she had told before his arrival. Her mother, reassured, showing plainly her lessened anxiety, and comforted by her belief in the inability of Patricia to dissemble, sparkled prettily in the conversation made notable by the wit with which the little group were so familiar.

The young girl turned her head very slowly toward her father, afraid of that which she dreaded to see in his face. How long had he stood in the doorway before entering the room? She had told him that her mother was fetching the studs for her, and so he would know that she had been with Captain Rattray that afternoon, but it was possible that he had not heard the foolish pretences they had made of not having met, which, with the lie, gave the situation its painful significance. Then came her overwhelming realization that her discovery of the hour was not without precedent. Her mother was like that. This was not the first time such things had happened. And were all those other gracious women whose subtlety was like a perfume, not tainted by the same restless desires? And the supercilious men? She felt that most of them were indifferent to all that did not concern their own pleasures. A frightful cynicism took possession of Patricia which was never to leave her.

She scrutinized the face of her father. Was he then like all the rest? If so,

it was not without suffering. She seemed to recognize a distorting anxiety in his eyes. He was regarding her with a sort of abjectness, yet over these things his smile was set like a mask, that smile which she had thought so hideous, but which she pardoned at that terrible moment.

Impulsively, she drew a rose from among those she wore and after pressing upon it the merest ghost of a kiss, she thrust it out to him, awkwardly, and in an outburst of girlish demonstrativeness quite unlike herself.

He took it with an uncertain gesture as if he did not know exactly what to do with it since it was too large to wear in his coat, but ended by holding it before him, smelling of it, and twirling it by its thick stem. He looked at it with a strange expression, and the girl was horrified for fear that he was recalling their conversation about the portrait, and attaching a significance to her act which she had not thought to give it. If he realized her pity, he would see that she knew the truth.

And that he must never suspect. There would be an indecency about such a thing from which she must save him and herself.

Still twirling the rose between his fingers, he flung a word or so to those he was leaving, and turned toward the door. In another moment he would be gone.

"I say, Father!" cried the girl.

"Yes, Pat?"

He waited, looking at her very intently, as if to once more make certain that she had not understood those things which were secret and stained. His face seemed very kind, even with the accompanying grimace of his smile.

"I want to talk to you."

A spark of apprehension shone in his faded eyes. "About what, Pat?"

"Oh, about going to Ireland."

She saw that he believed she spoke in jest.

"I mean it!" she cried.

She turned to meet the consternation of a gaze in which much was asked by the eyes of her mother. She answered with a wilful little nod, and by the saucy words of a spoiled child, a child who would persist in that which she contrived to make appear the caprice of a light heart.

A final relief from terror, a complete reassurance, and but a stifled note of regret, were in the tones of the voice which murmured:

"For shame, Pat!"

Captain Rattray, puzzled, searched the faces of mother and daughter, before saying:

"I say, that's a bit thick!"

Patricia met his troubled and questioning gaze, unabashed, mistress of herself.



TO an embalmer there are no good men and bad men. There are only dead men and live men.



THE Puritan is one who uses the Cross as a hammer to knock in the heads of sinners.



THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING A ROUGHNECK

By Robert Garland

Adagio

EUSTACE CARDELLE lay on a couch of mild magenta silk, strumming Debussy on a languid lute.

Beyond the opened windows, long and low, a cheery cherry tree shed its pale pink petals against a Belasco sunset. A breeze, plagiarizing *Madama Butterfly*, wafted the benignant blooms upon the listless figure lying there.

Having brought the air to a softly saddened close, Eustace gazed with dream-ridden eyes across the room to where Sylvestre Wallestone sat, enveloped in mist from his Russian cigarette and an air of superior aloofness.

Sylvestre rested his fine blond head against a high-backed Jacobean chair, so that his pure Greek profile caught the fast-fading glow; caught it and held it a precatory prisoner. His sandaled feet, slender as a January bank account, rested on a carven stool.

"Wednesday is a ghastly day," he sighed. "It is neither the beginning of the week nor the end."

Eustace agreed.

"Wednesday is impossible," he breathed. "It suggests oak furniture, matinees, the suburbs and other unpleasant things. It is as middle-class as an easel, as unbelievable as an upright piano."

The musician struck a single silver note; keyed his mellow voice to the tone.

"I am in a pale grey mood to-day," murmured he, "and would talk of love."

Sylvestre smiled his radiant, youth-

ful smile and watched the tremulous spiral from his cigarette fade in the air like a faint, frail, frightened dawn.

For a mesmeric moment all was still.

Eustace broke the silence, softly, sadly, as if he had been reading Schopenhauer.

"Let us shut out the sunset's bourgeois glare and light the candles upon the walls. Post-impressionism may be very well in art, but in nature it should be discouraged as one discourages pink postage stamps and permanently pleasant people."

Sylvestre arose with consummate artistry; drew the Venetian blinds. With heavy silken curtains he shut out the bars of intruding, dust-filled light. One by one he lighted the scented tapers ensconced about the room. As they flamed, their rare, oriental perfume spun an enchantment.

The world and its toil seemed far away, remote as a Jersey suburb.

Andante

Eustace sighed with happy discontent.

"Clorilla's love for me is a very perfect thing. Her love is coldly chaste, a pallid princess in an ivory tower. Nature, growing envious of Burne-Jones's stained-glass femininity, fashioned Clorilla in his school, almost succeeding, but not quite. Nature endowed her with a stained-glass exterior, it is true, but, I fear, Clorilla has a Shavian mind."

"Nature seldom quite succeeds," Syl-

vestre told him. "The best that she can do is fail successfully."

A little silence came between the two.

Sylvestre gazed at his friend with half-closed eyes.

"Tell me of her love," he breathed.

"Her love is a precious thing, precious and uncommon as a perfect lie. It is a love difficult to live down to. Maeterlinckian mildness may be carried to extremes, you know."

"But she loves you," Sylvestre ventured in his vastly vacant voice.

Eustace sighed.

"She loves me with a love too true to be entirely good. But, for the moment, we have parted, she and I. She endeavored to reform me, but I refused. A woman who loves you is a trial and may be borne, but a woman who endeavors to reform you is a nuisance, and should be abolished. And Clorilla is one of those women who think a man can be done over as if he were a flat. So I abolished her."

Eustace gathered up a handful of pallid petals and dropped them, one by one, on the silken rug it had taken many lives to weave in Smyrna—Delaware. Sadly, with restrained sweetness, he extenuated Clorilla.

"The woman has her strong points, heaven knows, but a strong point never fails to prick the bubbled iridescence of my lonely love. Clorilla, I don't mind saying it, is a combination of clashing curiosities. I fail to understand her, and I mistrust that which I fail to understand. She is naturally sweet and healthy, poor dear, but in an attempt to appear unconsciously intellectual she gives the impression of an ingrowing discomfiture. She has a mind as romantic as a Chambers novel, but she talks like Henry James."

Sylvestre smiled understandingly.

"No man could be expected to live with a woman who reminded him of 'The Golden Bowl,'" he said.

Eustace agreed.

"You understand almost every individual word Clorilla utters," continued he. "You sometimes catch the verb, but the subject of her conversation is

as illusive as the editor of a magazine."

"Speaking of editors," said Sylvestre, "isn't it time to introduce a plot?"

With a judicious gesture, Eustace silenced him.

"Hush!" said he. "The plot approaches, silver-shod, along the hall. As I told you, Clorilla and I parted several days ago, parted in unutterable anguish. The parting was superb. She, clever creature, was more like Nazimova than Nazimova, and I, she says, was just like Eddie Foy. She would return, she said, within a day or two. If by that time I had not conformed to her desires, I would, she added, 'rue the day.'"

"I have often wished to 'rue the day,'" murmured Sylvestre, half to himself, "but I have never known how to go about it."

"The words are hers," Eustace told him, "pretty things, but I don't know what they mean. Yesterday I wrote, telling her that I pleased myself entirely, I would not change, I could not change, not even for Clorilla."

Came a knocking at the door.

Allegro

A moment later, Clorilla crossed the threshold, her pagan personality crashing through the stifling silence which had descended upon the room.

Words are but empty shells, hollow, meaningless, where Clorilla is concerned. Standing motionless, with arms akimbo, she seemed the cover of a woman's magazine intensified by life. Her hair, where it caught the candles' light, glistened dully like a copper kettle, while in the shadow it bore the semblance of strawberry jam, so darkly red it was, so redly dark.

Her gown, clinging to her supple, slender form like a frightened kitten to a tree, was the gorgeous green of the pulsing sea, overlaid with an intense and beautifully bilious blue. But her face—her hopeless, heedless face! How face-like it was, and yet, withal, how unhuman! Grey it was, the grey of ashen hopes, slashed by the careless

crimson of her luscious, languid lips. Above her seething hair, like a night-cloud hovering over Etna, her huge black hat drooped drowsily.

She looked into the face of Eustace as if he were a clock, and she were forty minutes late. When she spoke, her voice was deep and calm, deep as Ibsen's "Rosmerholm," calm as Sunday in New Rochelle.

"I hate you to-day," she said, simply.

Eustace thanked her.

"I have become engaged to a real man," continued she, "a blondly beautiful man whom I plucked from a motor-truck as one plucks any flower in life's guileful garden. By profession he is the driver of a brewery truck. He thinks Omar Khayyam a new kind of drink and Shaw an upper-class attempt at profanity, but by physical standards he is a god among gods, a young, lusty god of the olden, golden days. He sat above me in the Avenue, wrapped in blue-shirted disdain, delivering beer to the Vanderbilts. And I craved him, tan shoes, checked cap and all. His name, I may add, is Alfalfa Smoot."

With one accord the two men did not speak.

Clorilla's lurid lips curled with calm contempt, after which she unfurled them carefully, so that she might speak again. With a gesture so superbly supercilious that it would have done credit to a manicurist, she made as if to fling her jeweled hand across the room.

"My fiancé," went on Clorilla, "waits without."

"Without what?" asked Sylvestre.

"Without his collar," she replied, cleverly, "for he's at work to-day."

The lute player sat suddenly, unthinkingly, upon his samovar, his face, soda-cracker pale, buried in his trembling hands.

"Upon his motor-truck he brought me here," continued she, the rapt reflection of a divine purpose in her sullen eyes, a lovely lilting quality in her husky voice, "and upon his motor-truck will he carry me away. Disguised as a bottle of imported beer, I rode beside

him proudly, reverently. When the day was barely eleven hours old I met my love in the avenue. A post-superman he appeared, big and brave and blond, and oh, so strong! With tear-filled eyes I watched him carry a keg to the Carnegies, carry it upon his shapely shoulder as if it were much less than naught. I have seen him, with his two bare, brown hands, toss beer-cases about as if they were toy balloons. You, Eustace, he could crush between his fingers. And I have brought him here to show you what a superman can do."

Her face was as impenetrable as a country sausage, as mysterious as a Brunswick stew.

"Would you have him kill me?" asked Eustace, in carefully modulated accents, as if he had not heard aright.

"Yes," she told him, arranging her back hair, "he is to kill you."

He rose to meet his fate, breast forward.

"It's such a bore to die in the middle of the week," he pleaded piteously, with a sort of desperate levity. "Why can't you make it Monday? I've no engagements then."

Clorilla ignored his paleaceous plea.

"Besides," he went on, hopefully, "I haven't had my tea."

Raising a golden whistle to her lips, she sent a shrill, vibrant blast skimming through the agitated atmosphere.

A moment later, Mr. Alfalfa Smoot entered the apartment.

Vivacissimo

If words are but empty shells where Clorilla is concerned, how can the humble typewriter be made to picture the many manly, massive charms of Mr. Alfalfa Smoot?

His hair, closely cropped, of a Marie Cahill blond, covered his rarely rounded head, which rose, like a candy cannon ball, above the rich red lusciousness of his sinuous shaven neck. His checked cap was clutched in his hirsute hand. His shirt, of Mediterranean blue, was open at the throat, so that Eustace

could watch, with fascinated gaze, the convulsive working of his Pomum Adami. His get-up was as informal as a Long Island train.

Clorilla took him in with warm, red eyes.

"Alfalfa, is it you?" she cried.

"Yes'm," answered he.

The woman, marvelous creature, approached him fearlessly. Placing her jeweled hand, a soft, useless, very precious hand, upon Alfalfa's stupendous shoulder, she gazed into his soul, gazed and gazed and gazed again.

"Would you do anything for me?" she asked.

"Yes'm," said the superman.

"Anything?" repeated she.

"Yes'm."

She made as if to swoon, hung herself ornamentally about his neck.

"My king," breathed she, arms about him.

Alfalfa stood her on her feet.

"Nix on that stuff," he said. "I lost a watch that way."

It was then she climbed, a figure superbly frail, on her histrionic high-horse, and, without effort, out-Leslie Carter. She tore a passion into tatters, cut the tatters into little bits. She pointed to Eustace, who stood before her, pale as a fog-bound light.

"Demolish him!" she shrieked.

Alfalfa shifted to the other foot.

The super-superman looked from Eustace to Clorilla, and back again. His eyes wandered about the room, took in the candles burning on the walls, the priceless furniture, the simmering samovar, and finally settled on Sylvestre, who, cigarette in hand, was watching developments from where he lay on the couch of mild magenta silk.

Like a suburban trolley, Clorilla shrieked again.

"Demolish him," she urged.

Wildly, like a mad thing, she tore a jeweled hat-pin from her head and slipped it to him.

"Puncture him with this," she bubbled, boiling over.

Alfalfa Smoot coughed nervously.

The woman fell upon her knees before her superman, wrapped her tender, lithe young arms about his stalwart, grand-piano legs. Her sobs were more than terrible to hear.

Sylvestre languidly arose, laid aside his volume of Beaudelaire. With an exquisite gesture he waved Clorilla's man away.

"Smoot," said he, severely, "we've had enough of this. You'd best be going."

"Yessir," said the superman, with floorward gaze.

With one hand he touched his forehead in the manner of his ancestors, while with the other he picked Clorilla up and sat her on the samovar.

He turned to go.

As he closed the door softly behind him, the woman, a faded, fragile flower, fell faintly, flatly to the floor.

Diminuendo

"Come, Clorilla," breathed Eustace tenderly, stooping over her. "Come, my love, to me. Mind, you see, has once more triumphed over matter."

The woman raised herself on her elbow, and, turning on him like a mad-dened animal, fascinatingly fierce, she bit him in the thumb.

"You—you *dilettante*!" she hurled at him.

At this insidious insult, a ghastly, neolithic, if not paleolithic, cry sprang full grown from Eustace's lethean lips. With his uninjured hand he dealt her a stinging blow on the carpus.

"Eustace," she cried, a smile upon her crimson lips, a joy unspeakable in her tone, "I have found my super-man at last, and he is . . . YOU!"

After which she fainted dead away.

And as she lay with face upturned, the warm blue blood from Eustace's wound dripped, drop by drop, upon her happy, ashen countenance.



THE FUNERAL

By Robert Macauley Jackson

THERE is the widow in her stylish mourning.
She has so much crêpe on that she is hot.
It is that which makes her face red—
She pretends it is grief.
She hated him and he hated her.
She married him for his money.
She was pretty then—would you think it?
Now she is free to marry the other man as soon as he gets his divorce.
She presses a lace edged handkerchief to her eyes.
She removes it from time to time to see who is present.
Yes, it is undoubtedly a success.
All the best people are here.
They try to look sad but succeed only in looking bored.
His son, that ineffectual young man with the silly mustache, is here too.
He is dressed in black and attempts to look brave though suffering.
He will have money now of his own.
He can be as wild as he pleases, though he has never been anything else.
He will be a great "catch."
All the mammas will be trying to marry their daughters to him.
He is consumptive and a roué—but he is wealthy.
The daughter is here too.
Her mourning is becoming and she knows it.
She is cross because she will have to give up teas and dances for a few months—
Only in public, however.
In private she can still fox-trot with an air of being frightfully wicked.
All the dead man's relatives are here too—damned hypocrites!
They are only grumbling how hot it is and wondering how much they will get.
They have all sent expensive floral pieces.
There are wreaths and crosses of roses and dozens of orchids.
The only one in the whole place who is really sad is his mother.
She has given up trying to be brave and has broken down completely.
She is weeping for her worthless son whom she loved with all her heart.

I also am dressed in black.
I put on my most solemn demeanor.
I walk with boots that creak, but on tip-toe.
I appear conscious of the solemnity of the occasion.
My heart is happy.
I think of the money that they will pay me.
This is the seventh funeral that I have had in five days.
Business is improving.
My wife wears furs and diamonds.
To-night we will go to the theater.
Afterwards we will have supper at a cabaret.

No funeral is worth what I charge for it, but I get my price.
 I have a good time on the money they pay me.
 I suppose I shall die sometime
 And then some one else will get money out of *my* wife.

The service is over.

Look at the long line of carriages.
 If you could look inside the pulled-down shades you would hear them complain-
 ing about the heat.
 Or talking about the last musical show they saw.
 If they would only use motors, the drive would not be so long—
 And Brooklyn is such a bore!



THE IDOL

By Thomas Ransford

A QUEER little figurine of jasper, ill-shapen and sinister, with oblique, furtive eyes. . . . What causes its magnetic charm? Has its maker imbued it with a mystic power, that passed into his handiwork out of his very soul?

He was an artist, no doubt, the man who coaxed this grotesque shape from the formless opaline stone—hundreds, perhaps thousands of years ago. The hands that fashioned it—slender, nervous, caressing brown hands—have long since crumbled into dust. The eyes that beheld it grow—dark, dreaming, heavily shaded eyes—have long since ceased to see and weep and smile. And the capricious soul that conceived it—is it still conscious somewhere in this universe of

the strange, the beautiful and horrible thing we call life? Or does it survive only in this little monster, that leers at me as it leered at its maker, leered at many countless others, while the centuries rolled by. . . .

Grave, phantastic Dwarf! You seem to look through all my petty blandishments—flirting and weeping, Zoroaster and cigarettes, beauty-spots and Beau-delaire—down to the nakedness of my shivering soul. Are you so wise, then? Have you known many like me? Have there been many like me? Are we all only masquerading under the merry, imposing, or brilliant semblance of frivolity, duty, or ambition? Are we all, all alike—sobbing, disconsolate—straining for love, or for death.



LES TROIS BAISERS

LÉGENDE ÉCOSSAISE

By Jacques Fréhel

IL y avait autrefois sur les côtes d'Ecosse un pauvre pêcheur dont la femme venait de mourir. Il avait une fille belle comme une fleur naissante; la rose boutonnée dans sa joue venait de s'ouvrir: sa figure était semblable à une matinée d'avril.

Quand la morte fut enterrée, le pêcheur et sa fille demeurèrent seuls, pleurant la défunte. Les lunes succédèrent aux lunes; les yeux du veuf se séchèrent. Bientôt il amena dans la chaumière une autre femme, la mégère Margaret.

La beauté d'Isabel rendit farouche la nouvelle épouse. Quand elle lui parlait, on croyait voir un dragon aux yeux de flamme accroupi sur ses épaules. Comme la terre souillée implore la pluie du ciel, ses mains avaient besoin de se laver dans du sang. La tuer! la tuer. . . .

Finalement, la mort lui parut expiation trop douce pour le crime de beauté et, un jour de fureur, elle traîna enfant par ses longs cheveux vers les rochers escarpés du rivage et la lança dans la sauvage mer de Craigy, disant:

—Reposez là, colombe Isabel, et que tous mes ennuis demeurent avec vous, jusqu'à ce que Kemp Owyne vienne, traversant la mer, et vous rachète avec trois baisers. Mais le monde peut s'écrouler. . . . Ah! jamais vous ne serez délivrée!

La jeune fille poussa des plaintes si retentissantes et eut des sanglots si profonds que les oiseaux de mer, margas, fous et cormorans, s'assemblèrent, essayant de la consoler. Ils tournoyaient autour d'elle avec des cris compatis-

sants. Les serpents de mer, comme des bêtes apprivoisées, léchaient ses pieds et l'enlaçaient tendrement. Mais, en peu de temps, sa voix enchantée devint forte, rauque, puis effroyable comme un meuglement de monstre sauvage.

Les oiseaux amis s'affolèrent, puis s'enfuirent, et les habitants des rivages se sauvèrent aussi. Leurs récits effrayés arrivèrent jusqu'à Kemp Owyne, le héros qui vivait au loin, bien au-delà des mers.

Son grand vaisseau noir parut sur les rives de Craigy à l'heure solennelle et mystérieuse où la nuit et le matin se rencontrent. L'alouette de mer se mettait à chanter et une aurore souriante, illuminée de rayons roses, naissait.

Que devint Kemp Owyne quand, au lieu de la bête sauvage qu'il s'apprêtait à combattre, il vit, flottant sur le miroir vert des flots, une femme belle comme la Méduse agonisante, et toute magnifiée d'horreur?

Sa chevelure ondoyait autour d'elle, s'enchevêtrait en boucles: deux de ses longues tresses s'enroulaient trois fois autour d'un arbre. Son corps, comme celui des filles de la mer, était terminé par une queue de poisson aux écailles de rubis.

Isabel reconnut le héros libérateur et leva vers lui des mains suppliantes:

— Délivre-moi, dit-elle, je ne vis plus que dans ton espoir. Vers toi j'ai crié, comme l'aigle désespéré de ne pouvoir monter au ciel. Te voil! Mon Dieu, que tu es beau! Tu sembles aspirer la lumière et la répandre, ô Kemp Owyne. Sauve-moi. Je veux fouler de nouveau

la terre avec des pieds humains et respirer des brises de parfum. Entre dans la mer de Craigy et donne-moi un baiser?

— Je ne puis t'obéir ainsi sur l'heure, répondit Kemp. Peut-être suis-je séparé de toi par un abîme infranchissable. Tu ne me connais pas, tu ne sais pas ce que je veux. Ton œil si beau contient-il des éclairs de l'âme ou l'intelligence vaine des désirs terrestres? Parle. Qu'as-tu à m'offrir!

Isabel répondit en tremblant:

— O Kemp Owyne, nul don n'est digne de ta beauté et de ta puissance; pourtant, du fond des vagues de saphir, les serpents m'ont apporté pour toi quelques-uns des trésors de la mer, qui ne rend rien. Voici une bague royale où rayonne la perle; tant que tu la porteras, tu seras aimé.

— Je ne veux point, dit Kemp Owyne, d'un amour aveugle, obtenu par magie.

— Accepte alors, reprit l'enfant, ce baudrier royal. Tant que tu le ceindras, tu règneras sur les peuples.

— J'ai déjà régné, prononça Kemp Owyne.

— Par pitié, supplia Isabel, ne dédaigne pas ce glaive enrichi de diamants: tant que tu le porteras sur la cuisse, tu vivras.

Mais Kemp Owyne dit, non sans dédain:

— Les gemmes sont sans prix et je ne crois pas à la mort.

Alors la jeune fille rejeta dans les flots les talismans et se mit à pleurer.

Et, comme un grand cygne noir, le vaisseau du héros s'éloigna.

Avec désespoir, les bras tendus, Isabel le vit disparaître jusqu'au rouge couchant, et elle disait:

— Un baiser de toi, Kemp Owyne! Ah! seulement un baiser de toi et de meurer enchaînée à jamais!

Cette pensée d'amour dénoua une des longues tresses blondes qui l'attachaient au tronc de l'arbre près de la rive de Craigy.

— Ah! dit-elle encore, je puis souffrir, maintenant, résignée; je t'ai vu et je penserai à toi.

L'acceptation de l'injustice et de la douleur dénoua l'autre tresse prisonnière.

Isabel flottait, libre, sur les eaux.

— Restons, dit-elle, au lieu où vint le libérateur.

Et, bercée sur la vague, elle s'endormit d'un sommeil profond.

A l'heure solennelle où la nuit et le matin se rencontrent, le vaisseau reparut portant Kemp Owyne.

Isabel s'écria:

— O héros bien-aimé, ne m'abandonne pas, aujourd'hui. En moi, un cœur d'esprits, immobile, chante l'ascension. Comme une frêle épave, j'ai été balayée par les vagues, traînée dans la tourmente, déchirée par les vents. Hagarde, j'ai sombré dans le gouffre. Jamais ma vie n'avait été si puissante que depuis qu'elle communie avec l'abîme. J'ai, aujourd'hui, des pensées brûlantes comme de véritables flammes de douleur.

— Ce sont elles qui t'ont libérée, murmura le héros, pensif. Tu peux quitter maintenant la mer sauvage de Craigy.

Isabel soupira:

— Partirai-je, ô héros bien-aimé, sans recevoir de toi les trois baisers?

— Je commence à t'entendre, dit Kemp Owyne. Souffrir a, pour toi, été victoire; tes faibles yeux commencent à deviner l'invisible. Je vais te donner, avec mon amour, les baisers qui délivrent.

Il la prit dans ses bras, toute défaillante de joie, et l'emporta sur son vaisseau noir, làbas, bien au delà des mers.



EIGHT-FIFTEEN TO ELEVEN

By George Jean Nathan

OF all the many three or four act plays produced in New York in the period elapsed since the last critical chronicle, there has been but one of sufficient mettle to interest the non-theatergoing, which is to say the drama-loving, person. With this single exception, these presentations have been so-called uplifting, or depressing, comedies like "The Road to Happiness," which guggle such mellow drops of wisdom as "A smiling face cures lumbago"; so-called farces like "See My Lawyer" in which the *mot* "This is a wedding, not a funeral" vies for chuckle precedence with the business of the gentleman who, being handed an expensive cigar, places it in his pocket and continues smoking his own frouzy stogie; to say nothing of so-called dramas like "Common Clay" in which the author, seized with a revolutionary spirit, contends that poor people have a much less pleasant time in this world than rich people and—say what you will against him—proves it.

The exception to this vesuviation of mediocrity is from the hand of Frederick Ballard and bears the name "Young America." Crude as it is and sketchy, and though in small degree departing the obvious, the play is yet the most refreshing thing of the season: a play which vouchsafes a few emotions to its audience instead of reserving them entirely for the actors; a play with a nary a corset-heave, nary an "Oh, my God!", nary a fist-bang upon library table, nary a single role that could be played by John Mason. Rather, a simple, happy-go-lucky, artless, thoroughly nice little affair, treading over

the familiar ground of Mark Twain's "Huck Finn" and "Tom Sawyer" and Tarkington's "Penrod," over the ground of Judge Shute's "Real Boys" and the celebrated Peck classic; an homely little play of respectable sentiment, honest laughter and quick observation; a vaudeville of human nature humanly presented in the place of a keith-and-proctoring of the usual snuffle-sonata performed by a cast of star nose-blowers.

There is little enough, in the Broadway sense, to the piece. It is merely a biography of tick-tacking upon windows, pulling front door bells, stealing things out of the neighbors' yards, stretching wires across sidewalks to trip up stately pedestrians and such like inconsequentialities—all bound 'round the love of a boy for a mutt of a dog. It is a play even without the held to be all vital "love interest," love interest that is to say of the Broadway gender, which means the interest which an audience is requested to manifest over the spectacle of Mr. Robert Edeson expressing his overpowering passion for the leading lady by approaching her with both hands in the pockets of his dinner jacket and making a wistful *moué*. It is a play without a single scene, alas, in which the stellar pantaloons refers to a gentleman's whiskers as alfalfa or in which, when the composer Wagner is mentioned, a character mistakes him for the shortstop on the Pittsburgh baseball team. But, in spite of these flaws, Mr. Ballard's effort (doubtless ministered to in passing by George M. Cohan) is so completely unforced an effort, so like a simple and unimportant story told simply and casu-

ally, that it leaves one merry and grateful.

Many of the comedy episodes of the piece call for especial mention, as for example, the cross-examination by the judge of the juvenile court of a small colored boy with the latter's fat, hot, black mother guarding her little angel from the rear; as for example, the deft bringing of the action to a solution through the wild maneuvering of the entire cast to bring back to life a dog that has been run down by an automobile; as for example, the scene wherein three married couples, close friends, are suddenly projected into a violent and devastating quarrel over absolutely nothing. But of particular pleasure is the performance in this play of a lad rejoicing in the nabob patronymic of Benny Sweeney, a youngster who, so goes the tale, was captured in a cigar factory and impressed into thespian service. Loth as I am to encourage such depredations and blighting of young men's careers, I cannot resist the temptation to compliment young Mr. Sweeney as an actor—though in so doing I probably become a further factor in his *dégringolade*.

A second exception to the prevailing panorama of ennui—but an exception for a reason quite other than that attaching to "Young America" and so in itself a thing entirely apart from this general process of appraisal—is Mr. Cohan's own play, "Hit-the-Trail Holliday." On the night of the first presentation of this piece, Mr. Cohan, in response to a deafening pounding of palms, stepped out upon the stage from the wings, bowed, signaled for silence and did not say: "You—poor—boobs, so you've fallen for the old bunk once again and fallen as hard as ever, have you?—even if you don't know it!" This doubtless is what was in the keen Mr. Cohan's mind, even though what he actually said was little else than a pseudo-bashful and surprised thank-you. For, in this latest play of his, Mr. Cohan has composed a bravura piece of the ballyhoo order; a piece made up, from first to last, of all the ancient stuff

which he himself has frequently pointed out is "sure-fire" with the native Messrs. Snooks, Tony Lumpkins and their fellow bogtrotters. As an example of theatrical challenge to the individual known as *l'homme sur la rue*, Mr. Cohan's exhibit marks a superbly successful feat. And it succinctly demonstrates once again that he knows the American public as probably no other theatrician of the day knows that fowl.

"Hit-the-Trail Holliday" is "Broadway Jones." "Broadway Jones" was "Get-Rich-Quick Wallingford." "Get-Rich-Quick Wallingford" was "The Fortune Hunter." "The Fortune Hunter" was "Quincy Adams Sawyer." And "Quincy Adams Sawyer" was "Hit-the-Trail Holliday." The only difference is that, though the mortgage is lifted by the hero of "Hit-the-Trail Holliday" just as it was by the hero of "Quincy Adams Sawyer," the hero of "Hit-the-Trail Holliday" lifts it off a hotel instead of a farm house. And the only other difference is that, where in "Broadway Jones" the hero was a Broadway rounder who reformed both himself and a country town, in the latest Cohan piece he is a Broadway bartender who reforms both himself and a country town.

Consider these sure-fire ingredients out of which Mr. Cohan has fashioned the play:

1. The landlord villain who bulldozes his poor tenant, who speaks in a loud, gruff voice, who wears a heavy gold watch-chain and who, turning at the door, tells the poor tenant that if he doesn't do so-and-so by tomorrow he'll have to suffer the consequences.

2. The noble hero with curly hair and a blue suit who turns to the poor tenant, says "Will you leave this matter to me? Thank you," steps nose to nose with the villain and tells him to go to hell.

3. The villain's equally villainous son who bulldozes the poor tenant and the poor heroine, who speaks in a loud, gruff voice, who wears fancy clothes and who sneers at the hero, who, in turn, blithely laughs his contempt for

the son, snaps his fingers under the latter's nostril, refers to him jocularly as "the merry little cut-up," and so arouses the son's ire to the fighting point.

4. The villain's son who, being there-upon urged by his father to strike the hero, says "Hm, I wouldn't soil my hands on such a person!"

5. The line about listening to a character eat soup.

6. The joke about the wife who talks her husband to death.

7. The joke about marriage.

8. The other joke about marriage.

9. The kindly, sweet-natured, impoverished old minister and his kindly, sweet-natured daughter.

10. The Star Spangled Banner.

11. The rundown business enterprise which the hero, by up-to-date methods, builds into an enormously prosperous organization in two days.

12. Talk about hundreds of thousands of dollars.

13. Talk about millions of dollars.

14. The hero who coolly faces the gang of disgruntled, threatening laborers, conciliates them and wins them over to his side.

15. The speech of the hero to the crowd beneath the window.

16. The fat colored maid who persistently mispronounces the hero's name.

17. The whistling office boy.

18. The comic policeman.

19. The reiteration of the command to *sit down*.

20. The triumph of virtue over villainy.

These, but a few illustrations, yet sufficing to serve as a criterion. All Mr. Cohan has done to beguile the great unwashed is to sketch, in his hero, a superficial parallel to the case of Billy Sunday. And the great unwashed, as always, has, as Mr. Cohan accurately knew it would, swallowed its favorite bait hook, line, sinker and row-boat.

The series of deliberately unfriendly acts and an epilogue called "Common

Clay," I have already briefly alluded to. This, the handiwork of a Mr. Cleves Kinkead, who, appraising him from his curtain speech on the opening night of his trump, is the sort of author who believes that a playwright owes everything to the actors. Mr. Kinkead is a graduate member of the legislature of a middle-western state, an alumnus of playwriting under Professor Baker of Harvard College, a winner, with this play, of the Bostonian Craig grand prix, and, as such and probably in view of which, the most promising candidate for the authorship of dramas for servant girls that Broadway has seen in some time. Aside from one very well-written slice of dialogue in which the central figure of the play describes the dingy emptiness of her life preceding the epoch of her defloration, his work is a mere commonplace and shabby reflex of Coppée's "Guilty Man," descending at times to the limit of grotesquerie. The play, in short, is of precisely that species of sweetened concubinage which so irresistibly captivates the fancies of upstairs maids, butlers, footmen and the average Broadway theatergoer.

The tale is of a poor girl violated by the gaudy son of the household in which she is employed, of the attempt on the part of the young man's father to shelter him from responsibility for the act and the concomitant scandal, of the girl's discovery that she is the illegitimate offspring of a man high in public affairs, of the latter's "atonement," of the girl's decision henceforth to abandon the sex motif and lead a pure and moral life and of her reconsidering this decision and becoming an opera singer. Such the prize-winning tooth of our conterraneous drama; such the confections sponsored by master of the drama in America's leading university. How now about this Professor Baker, he who has been press-agented so copiously and, shall we not say, persuasively? Consider his producers and their products, not in their later years when his influence upon them may or may not have been dissi-

pated, as in the cases of Sheldon and Ballard, but fresh from his class-room. In all honesty, has this honourable professor done one thing, soever small, to improve the American drama? I doubt it. True, he has taught numerous young fellows the facile trick of building shows, but has he taught them how to write plays? A different thing this latter, and vastly. Has one single dramatic effort containing an ounce of philosophy, an ounce of sober theme, a dash of cultured wit or a trace of smart observation and penetration come directly from his lecture chamber? Have his products not been rather the products of the cheap showshop mind? What is the use of teaching young men how to write plays if the young men have no plays to write? You can't be a conductor unless you've got a street-car.

"The Road to Happiness" is a play whose scenes are laid in the country, whose plot concerns the parentage of an illegitimate baby and whose characters are a congregation of ignoramus—a play, to wit, which is dubbed "optimistic" and "wholesome." In a word, it is the kind of thing in which the main actor in the rôle of one of God's noblemen stands under the old chestnut tree in a suit of overalls for a couple of hours and, with eyes half closed, as if meditating upon the exquisite beauty of the sentiments contained therein, exudes such benevolent gumdrops as "What difference does it make who has all the money as long as everybody's happy? Cheerfulness is better than money. You might lose your money, but you can keep on bein' cheerful if you only keep up hope."

The play, on the whole, amounts to nothing but a monologue of mush. From 8:15 to 11 the heroic figure of the traffic is busy taking under his wing the girl who has been driven forth into the night by the cruel stepfather—"she shall come home with *me*!" defiantly proclaims our hero—; holding his crippled old white-haired mother's hand and telling her she will surely get well

if she only has faith; petting a dog, patting a horse and dispensing such noble, if occult, texts as "Laughter on the lips makes sunshine in the heart." From first to last a laboriously aimed and fired battery of dum-dum platitudes and larded mottoes; an antique of the "God Bless Our Home" school of drama.

The piece has not a single justification, of whatever sort. Unlike the plays of James A. Herne, upon the pattern of which it presumably has been built, this play confounds chin whiskers and gingham aprons with types of rural character. As a consequence, its personages are approximately as authentic and relevant as the indecuous country constable of musical comedy with his badge pinned upon his stomach. It is, in short, an unintentional—and very good—burlesque. Staged by Willie Collier, acted by George Bickel and played in the farce tempo, it would unquestionably be quite entertaining.

Of "Rosalind," J. M. Barrie's one-act play presented as an after-piece to a rather languid revival at the Lyceum of Captain Marshall's droll and not unfamiliar farce "The Duke of Killcrankie," there is little I can think of to say. The piece leaves no particular impression other than a feeling that its author has in this instance Fletcherized a marshmallow. The central notion of the bonbon, to wit, that it is utterly impossible for a popular actress to leave the stage, however she may long to, because her public will not permit her, is, to say the least, somewhat bizarre. And the extravagant sentimental treatment which Barrie has visited upon this notion tends only to make it slightly more quizzical. The speech of the middle-aged actress to her young lover, in which the actress, moist of eye, indulges in the stereotyped lament over what - is - fame - after - all - when - one - compares - it - with - what - might - have - been - kiddies - tugging - at - my - apron - strings - and - a - little - home - by - the - sea - and - contentment - and - happiness misses coaxing a disrespectful snicker only by

virtue of the dramatist's polished writing of it. And so, too, does this hold in the case of several of the related recitals and episodes.

Mr. Max Marcin, a new aspirant to metropolitan theatrical notoriety, recently experienced the unique shame of having two of his plays produced in Broadway playhouses on successive evenings. One of the pieces was a melodrama given the title "The House of Glass"; the other a farce called "See My Lawyer." Both were conventional and tardy specimens and had little to recommend them. The first-named piece was the old story of the innocent person made to serve sentence for another's crime and the subsequent "hounding" of the innocent person by the relentless and vindictive police. In other words, *Alias Jimmy Bosh*. The author made a valiant effort to inject journalistic life into the piece by scattering here and there in the dialogue allusions to the Osborning of criminals but the stratagem was altogether too transparent. The general conception of the characters was not a little puzzling, and, shall we say, abstruse? For example, the attorney for what was designated as the greatest railroad system in the country was represented as a low comedy buffoon in a constant state of alcoholization. The general conception of the manner in which smart houses are conducted was similarly not a little difficult of penetration. For example, a police detective coming to a well-conducted house to arrest an invading malefactor was, without invitation, presently found playing a game of billiards with his erstwhile quarry!

Mr. Marcin's farce was the old get-rich-quick business farce all over again. True, the author struck the notion of satirizing the plea of insanity as a prison getaway, but in his aim at satire went wide of the mark and hit, instead, burlesque. Nor burlesque of an honest nature—which would have been thoroughly relevant and probably highly funny—but burlesque of the vaudeville "small time." Burlesque, that is,

such as depicting a demented man acting like a musical comedy comedian. Which, obviously, is a hyperbole that imposes too severe a strain upon the credulities. Having not even the advantage of the single potential, if unrealized, amusing quality of the farce, Mr. Marcin's melodrama will doubtless be a big Broadway success. But the gentleman would still seem to have a considerable way to go, a considerable amount to learn and a considerable need for ingenuity and inventiveness and scrivening skill before he will be able to achieve a big Broadway failure.

Although, upon the subject of ladies' gowns I am scarcely an expert, inasmuch as my idea of a beautiful dress is a dark blue skirt and jacket with some fluffy white stuff around the neck, I suppose the toilettes displayed in the modiste chamber scene of the late Mr. Charles Klein's last work and monument, "*Cousin Lucy*," are very beautiful. There is one gown, for instance, which looks like a crystallized minestrina soup and which hits the wearer at latitude 40:13 north. There is another, for example, which has the appearance of a tidy edged with doilies and which drapes itself jauntily over the wearer's caboose; and still another which seems to be the sort of napkin Gordon Craig might use. There are something like two dozen of these confections revealed in parade upon the platform, and, the night I witnessed the exhibition, I noticed that, during this display of dazzling sartorial opulence, all the men in the vicinity of my chair were looking at a girl not far away who had on a plain little white dress with a pink rose stuck in the belt. * * *. Of the play, designed to set off the person of one Eltinge, an impersonator of women, nothing need be said.

Of "*No. 13 Washington Square*," a farce derived by Mr. Leroy Scott out of his novel of the same title, ditto.

Of "*Just Outside the Door*," a play by Jules Eckert Goodman, divulged very briefly, ditto. But wait. There is

something to be mentioned here. The theme of Mr. Goodman's play (which, by the way, received an admirable staging at the hands of Mr. Henry Miller) was summed up in the following speech of one of the protagonists: "In wireless there is a thing called static. No one knows what static really is, but when it is in the air messages get all mixed up and the whole system of wireless may be thrown out of joint. That is what coincidence is; it is the static in human events. It is something that we do not understand, that reason may not be able to solve, but it is real; and when it happens it throws all our petty little endeavors out of joint; it twists and changes our whole system of life. And don't think for a moment because it isn't understood that it isn't real—that it isn't vital—that it isn't directed."

Quel oracularness!

And logic!

Everything Professor Goodman thus grandiosely claims for coincidence may, on his own argument, be also claimed (whereas they, too, have baffled understanding and solution) for hay fever and Eva Tanguay. And—and this is the point—with just as much interest. The contention that because we do not at the moment understand such mysteries as these—and are not able to explain away and combat them—and the contention that because our scientists have not so far attained to a knowledge of what static is, static is therefore something finally intangible and indecipherable—and the consequent drawing of a parallel between coincidence and this static—is typical enough of the species of reasoning practised by the American playwright.

Following the same process of logic which he permitted himself in this drama, Professor Goodman, had he written the play some years back, before the discovery of the significance of the appendix, would no doubt have phrased his theme thus: "In physiology there is a thing called the appendix. No one knows what the appendix really is, but when it goes up into the

air the stomach gets all mixed up and the whole system may be thrown out of joint. That is what coincidence is: it is the appendix in human events. It is something that we do not understand." And so on. The nonsense is evenly divided between the two speeches. Furthermore, to believe that coincidence is directed is akin to believing in fatalism. And to believe in fatalism is to believe that the reason moving picture heroes are not killed, and do not deserve to be killed, when they leap off high cliffs and jump out of balloons and wear sport-shirts for a living is because God is particular friend and admirer of Mr. Ralph Ince. Professor Goodman's play is, in short, still another effervescent contribution to the American drama of ideas.

A docile piece, of the general thematic mien of "Rutherford and Son," "Business Is Business" and a dozen or so other masques, was "Our Children," an adaptation from the German by Mr. Louis K. Anspacher. The resident impression of the evening was of "The Bubble" acted by two Louis Manns. The first act was laid "in the dining room of Willybald Engel's new home in Lynn, Mass.," the dialogue concerning itself with the love of Engel, a wealthy shoe manufacturer, for his scapegrace son and the indifference of Engel to the happiness of his self-sacrificing drudge of a daughter. The second act was laid in the same scene, two years later; the dialogue concerning itself with the loss of Engel's money, the defection from the household of the daughter, unable longer to endure her father's temper, and the defection of the ungrateful son upon whom Engel has lavished his all. The third act was laid at the Café des Beaux Arts, three minutes later; the dialogue concerning itself with the coincident defection from the Engels' presence of Archie Bell, the estimable dramatic von Tirpitz of the *Cleveland Leader*, and myself, the ordering of something to drink, and the speculation as to why managers still put on such plays. That

portion of the drama which I saw revealed a well-written scene or two and a bit of apt character drawing. But one has a right to expect something more of a playmaker than merely so much. Even on a pass.

The difference between Ballard's play "Young America" and Katherine Miller's and Allena Kanka's play "Just Boys," which deals with a similar theme, is the difference between sentiment and sentimentality, the difference between one chocolate cream and a pound of chocolate creams. The former is simple and unaffected—the latter was written by women. "Just Boys" is "Madame X" composed by Ben B. Lindsey. A juvenile court judge, separated from his baby son because his wife is the heroine of the play and has to be made sympathetic, years later finds himself sitting in judgment upon the youngster, who has meantime gone astray. Here, "Common Clay" acted by a ten-year-old Jane Cowl. Here, the damp old court-room. Here, in a word, two hours and ten minutes of pish surrounding three minutes of good situation.

"Moloch," Beulah M. Dix's this season's push at a war play, is, like her last season's "Across the Border," an uninterrupted series of platitudes recited with an air of momentous gravity. Every sentence spoken contains at least a dozen dashes. Every other minute an actor moves solemnly, portentously, to the footlights and pronounces some perfectly familiar and obvious argument against war in the measured tones of a prophet. Phrases of the Robert Service Yukon school are scattered around in the dialogue to give the exhibit a "strong" aspect. In its entirety, the play is precisely the sort of document against war that one might expect from the hand of a sentimental, middle-aged New England woman.

"Husband and Wife," similarly, is precisely the sort of document against husbands that one might expect from the hand of a sentimental, middle-aged New England woman—though the play happens to have been written by Charles Kenyon, doer of "Kindling." Beginning rather well in an effort to depict the character of the silly little blonde poison known as the flapper wife, the author rapidly becomes so sorry for his central female and so cross with her husband that his play collapses before it manages to get under fair headway. The result is the ancient triangle piece of the extravagant wife who, on the eve of running away with her admirer, learns that her husband is ruined and tumbles back in contrition against his bosom. An echo of "The Spendthrift," "Fine Feathers," "Samson," etc., etc. The most conspicuous incident concerned with the presentation was the hailing by the critical synod of pretty Miss Olive Tell, who essayed the role of the wife, as a new leading woman of a high and lustrous order. This doubtless because the lady played the part from start to finish with her handkerchief pressed to her nose. Any young woman who is an expert sniffer is certain to be acclaimed at once an expert leading lady. The truth of the matter is that, had Miss Tell interpreted her role in exactly the opposite manner—had she played the flapper wife as a flighty, completely unemotional, butterfly-natured, smiling little heart-breaker and havoc-bringer—she would have achieved not only a much more acute and logical portrayal but would as well have contrived to bring to the play a note more vital and telling.

"Two Is Company," a musical comedy purified from the French of Paul Hervé. The musical portion supplied by the tuneful Jean Briquet. The comedy portion by an actor who pronounces "salon" as Ceylon.

AFTER ALL, WHY NOT?

By H. L. Mencken

WHEN, in the year of our Lord 1909, a Joint Select Committee of Lords and Commons held public hearings upon the proposal to abolish the English censorship of stage plays, the precincts of St. Stephen's were bombarded and made horrible for three weeks on end by the moans and snortings of those in favor of it. One heard with amazement of the atrocities perpetrated by the censor in the name of Christian decorum—masterpieces suppressed out of hand, the stage debased and made a mock of, genius strangled and brought to despair. All the jitney Ibsens and Molières of the day came forward with their gruesome tales of frightfulness: among them, Comyns Carr, Cecil Raleigh, Granville Barker and Hall Caine. Each had wounds to expose, an affidavit to make; each knew of others who had suffered even more; each viewed the future of dramatic art in England with a sinking heart, almost with crawling flesh. William Archer, no dramatist himself but the common grandma of them all, said that the jig was already up, the goose already cooked, the intellectual drama already denaturized, knocked in the head, sewn in a sack, thrown to the buzzards. As for George Bernard Shaw, he grew so hot and saucy, telling of the wrongs done to him by the censor, that the committee, in sheer self-defense, actually had to kick him out of its audience-chamber. (A literal fact: *vide* the London *Times* of July 6, 1909, or page 53 of the Report From the Joint Select Committee of the House of Lords and the House of Commons on the Stage Plays [Censorship]; Together With the Proceedings of the Committee, Minutes of

Evidence, and Appendices; London, 1909.)

Appalled by this grim chronicle of official deviltry and artistic martyrdom, and eager to do something at once to relieve the jitney Ibsens and Molières, the amateur Brieuxes and Hauptmanns, the one-cylinder Strindbergs, Hervieus, Andrieffs and Schnitzlers—staggered and in a hurry, the chairman of the Committee, the Right Hon. Herbert Samuel, M.P., beckoned to a catchpoll and sent the fellow post haste for Mr. A. B. Walkley, the affable critic of the *Times* and a trustworthy adviser in all æsthetic emergencies. Mr. Walkley, being fortunately in his studio, attended immediately, and, being duly searched and sworn, deposed as follows:

MR. SAMUEL (*excitedly, wringing his hands*)—In God's name, my dear Arthur, what are we to do?

MR. WALKLEY (*with the superb nonchalance of an ambassador*)—Do? Nothing,* my dear fellow. Nothing.*

MR. S. (*sforzando*)—What? Nothing!*

MR. W. (*pizzicato*)—Precisely. Nothing.* (*He idly turns the pages of Die Gartenlaube, indicating savoir-faire.*)

MR. S. (*appassionata stringendo*)—But consider, my dear boy, the situation. Here we have one of the oldest and noblest of the arts at the mercy of a Philistine in office, perhaps even a Pharisee. A play of the highest rank, a work of art of the utmost significance and value, may be destroyed by the simple fiat of a Dogberry with a sour stomach, a blockhead somewhat cramped. Surely every right-minded man must grant that this is a hell of a situation. (*Pausing for breath, he takes out a handkerchief and blows his wrist.*)

MR. W. (*vivace*)—Pish, my dear Herbert! Pish! I grant nothing* of the sort. The

**Pro.* neth-ing, and as two distinct words; thus, *Neth Ing.*

trouble with you is that you have allowed all these playwright boys to spoof you. Suppose it is true that their precious plays are tinned by the censor, what are the odds?

MR. S. (*impetuoso*)—But what of art? What—

MR. W. (*giacoso*)—Art your grandmother! Take all the plays the censor has suppressed since the Johnstown flood, and you couldn't boil enough art out of them to fry a flea. All this art gabble gives me cholera morbus. I am getting good and tired of it. Why should we take the theater so solemnly? Why should we shed such huge, globulous tears over the woes of mountebanks, charlatans, quacks, clowns, harlequins, drolls, jack-puddings, zanies, pickle-herrings, pantalons, mimes, pierrots, jack-a-dandys, scaramouches, sganarelles, clod-polls, dunces, *hanswürste*, *possenreiszers*, Merry Andrews, *farceurs*, jesters, *grimacers*, pill merchants, press agents, gillies, *paillasses*, empirics, *Pagliaccis*, *saltimbanques*, humbugs, Mr. Bunks—

MR. S. (*con orrore*)—But surely, my d—

MR. W. (*con forza e tutta feroce*)—Enough! Let us cease weeping over the tragedies of the Punch-and-Judy show! After all, what difference does it make whether Ibsen's "Gengangere" is licensed or not? Who, indeed, cares a damn? Do you? Do I? And such things as Barker's "Waste" and Shaw's "Press Cuttings"—what do they amount to at bottom? And "Salomé"? And "La Dame aux Caméllias"? And "Les Avariés"? Let us admit the truth, my dear Samuel: the importance of these things is a mere mirage, an hallucination, an optical delusion. The stage is really no more important than millinery is important. The question whether a new play by Pinero or Brieux or Sudermann or D'Annunzio is presented or not presented—that question is of no more serious consequence than the question whether women shall make their hats match their complexions or their complexions match their hats. Why sit here and sweat? Why get into such a fever over harmless pleasantries? We begin to show the woman's club complex, the editorial writer complex, the Chautauqua complex, the *Spectator* complex, the God-sent statesman complex, the damphool complex. I move we adjourn.

I dessay (though I don't know, and hesitate to ask) that my estimable *bierbruder*, George Jean Nathan, was concealed in the gallery during this iconoclastic rhodomontade, for the doctrine there and then laid down by Mr. Walkley has since appeared copiously in the contributions of this Mr. Nathan to THE SMART SET and is now again made

brilliantly visible in his new-laid tome of dramatic criticism, "ANOTHER BOOK ON THE THEATRE" (*Huebsch*). In other words, it is the distinguishing mark of this volume that it does not take the theatre seriously, that it bends no knee to self-elected revolutionists and messiahs, that it squeezes no tear over bogus masterpieces done to death. Does an Augustus Thomas invade the stage with corn-doctor magic and Sunday-school platitudes, proving laboriously that love is mightier than lucre, that a pure heart will defeat the electric chair, that the eye is quicker than the hand? Then Nathan proceeds against the rev. professor with a slap-stick ground to razor keenness, lancing his ponderosity, letting out his gas. Does a Belasco, thumb on forehead, posture before the enraptured yeomanry as a Great Artist, the evidence being a photographic reproduction of a Childs restaurant, and a studio bedizened with a tasty collection of Jacobean, Chinese, Louis Quinze, Byzantine, Chippendale, Heppelwhite, Sheraton, Benares, Gobelins and Adam knick-knacks? Then George flings a laugh at him and puts him in his place. And does some fat rhinoceros of an actress, unearthing a smutty play by some corn-fed Corneille or Racine, loose its banal obscenities upon the vulgar in the name of Sex Hygiene, presuming thus to teach a Great Lesson, to blow up the Conspiracy of Silence, to save impatient flappers from the Moloch's Sacrifice of the Altar—does such a bumptious baggage fill the newspapers with her yammering and the largest theatre in town with eager boobs? Then the ribald Jean has at her with a flour-sack stuffed with the pollen of the *Ambrosia artemisiaefolia*, and so drives her from the scene to the tune of her own unearthly sneezing.

In a word, the fellow is rough. There is, so far as I can discern, no thought of wounded feelings, no spirit of the Red Cross, in his performances. If an actor displeases him, which is almost always, he knocks the animal in the head with as much ease and casualness

as one might apply to the malleting of a fly. If an actress strikes him as too old, or too thick through the Dardanelles, or too heavy on her feet, or too gurgly in voice, or too palpably wigged or bust-developed or false-hipped, then he says so plainly and without mawkish sentimentality. And so with dramatists and their work. He pays no regard, it would seem, to the sublime intents and purposes of these literati; the sole object of his consideration is the merchandise they actually put on view. If the thing they offer is genuinely amusing, if it has so much as a single idea in it, if it shows the slightest sign of cleverness, then Nathan is hotly for it, no matter how modest its pretensions, no matter how little its concern with adultery, murder, love, Sing Sing, the Wassermann reaction, German spies, the Star-Spangled Banner and the other stock subjects of the current drama. And if, contrariwise, it is a piece of idle rumble-bumble and tosh, a mere excuse for actorial ranting, a gaseous invertebrate, a shoddy job, then he achieves upon the skull of its author a rattle as of distant artillery, no matter how lofty a pundit that author may be. Thus, for example, one finds him praising Frank Craven and hooting at Thomas and Brieux. And thus, in the middle ground, one finds him distinguishing most discreetly between what is sound and worthy in such men as Edward Sheldon and Eugene Walter and what is no more than Broadway bombast.

Again in a word, the fellow is honest. And yet again in a word, he is astonishingly penetrating and discreet. I say astonishingly as a sop to a conventional prejudice: one can never convince the vulgar and besotted—*i.e.*, those who read and believe newspapers—that a high degree of critical sagacity may be wedded to a general attitude of sniffishness to the thing criticised. The critic of the popular ideal is a gloomy Gus, a coroner, an I-regret-to-report. And to this ideal, of course, most of the actual critics of the republic try to

live up, just as actors try to live the lives of the great generals, millionaires and Don Juans that they impersonate on the stage. Even those critics who are cursed with a sly and secret leaning toward jocosity are forever hiding their seltzer siphons behind them and leaping for the *prie-dieu*. The Polonius of the old school, the critic of the William Winter or Clement Scott model, is full of tart remarks when he discourses of Ibsen's "Et Dukkehjem" and he may even essay to attack the lesser moderns with downright kidding, but when it comes to so tiresome a piece of nonsense as "Cymbeline" or to so tedious and artificial a mummer as Robert Mantell, he is flat on his face, his whiskers in the dust, his throat full of reverent "Ahs!" and "Ohs!" And by the same token, the Hazlitt of the new school, though he may spill many select wheezes upon such things as "Hazel Kirke" and "The Young Mrs. Winthrop," is yet poisoned by a pervasive solemnity when the referee announces such blatant slobber-gobble as Galsworthy's "The Fugitive," or Knoblauch's "My Lady's Dress," or, to take an even more horrible example, Kinkead's "Common Clay." Which school is the worse I'm sure I don't know: I have never been able to make up my mind. All I do know is that George Jean Nathan belongs to neither—that he is wholly devoid of the classical superstition and as wholly devoid of the Drama League of America superstition. He has, to use an old term, an eclectic mind. He applies to the business before him, not predispositions and prejudices, no formulæ and catch-words, but the cold common sense of the man who knows precisely what he is talking about and who can express his ideas clearly, forcibly and attractively.

No doubt the first and strongest impression of "Another Book on the Theatre" will be made by its humor, or, more accurately, by its wit—by its grotesque piling up of extravagances, its amazingly ingenious absurdities, its devastating burlesquing of this or that fraud. But the more you read into it

the more you will find that a sound, critical theory lies under all this Rabelaisian sporting with ideas, that Nathan is anything but a mere *enfant terrible* of the theatre, making game of men and things that he does not understand. On the contrary, it is precisely his profound understanding of them that makes his discussion of them so charming, and withal so profitable. Go through his book carefully, and on almost every page, even in the midst of what seems to be deliberate buffoonery, you will encounter sharp and penetrating judgments of this dramatist or that drama, criticisms boiled down to a few arresting phrases, a whole philosophy of art put into an epigram. This method, of course, is something to which we of America are entirely unaccustomed. Our newspaper critics may occasionally rise to whimsicality, but when they sit them down to write books they immediately grow as solemn as owls, and if they happen to be of the new school—*i.e.*, the Harvard-psychology-nuance-atmosphere school—they are apt to be even more solemn than if of the old school. Moreover, we almost always confound long-windedness with profundity: the man who would be taken seriously must use tortuous sentences and many of them, and fill them with bleak, respectable words. Nathan violates the canon in both directions. On the one hand, he rescues criticism from its exile with theology, embalming and obstetrics, and puts it among what Nietzsche called the gay sciences, along with war, fiddle-playing and laparotomy. And on the other hand he throws overboard all the old critical apparatus—such rubber-stamp phrases, for example, as “Belasco the Wizard,” “as funny as ‘Charley’s Aunt,’” and “the big scene reminds one of ‘Mrs. Dane’s Defense’”—and tells his story in straightforward, untechnical language, helped out, when English fails, by French, German, Italian, Swedish, Russian, Turkish, Swiss, Austrian, Spanish, Portuguese, Walloon, Gaelic, American, Mexican and Norwegian, and by algebraic symbols,

musical notation and the signs of the Zodiac.

The result is a book that is as entertaining as a murder and as stimulating as a shot of hooch. Familiar with a good part of its contents for some time past, not only because Nathan is no purist and has not hesitated to lift and improve my ideas, but also because he has tried his own upon me over many a plate of victuals, I have yet re-read the whole thing with endless joy, chuckling over its inspired foolishness, snorting with mirth now and then over some particularly happy hit, and filled all the while with the dominating feeling that things worth while were being said, that I was really learning something, despite the unprecedented agreeableness of the business. I have read all the books of dramatic criticism printed in English since the time of Tom Robertson, and a good many of them I have not only read but also studied. I tell only the simple truth when I say that I can’t recall a single one of them, English or American, with more originality and ingenuity of reasoning in it, or more sound information, or a quicker or more accurate faculty of judgment. And what thus appears to be in the book is actually in the man. His knowledge of the current European drama, for example, is almost staggering in its copiousness: he knows, not twice as much about it, but ten times as much about it as the bilious college boys who discuss it in the indigestible reviews and write books about it for the Drama League. He has seen or read all the plays worth seeing or reading, American, English, German and French. No watery-eyed Ibsenist, he yet estimates justly the indubitable splendor of Ibsen. No slippered sophomore, fan-toddish over the so-called classics, he is yet privy to all that is genuinely worthy of veneration in the Elizabethan drama, and what is more, to that which is hollow and meretricious—*i.e.*, to that which is chiefly hummed by the bellicose grandpops. In a word, his glance across the field of the drama is wide-angled and tolerant; he is in favor of

anything that promises civilized beguilement, whatever its source; he is not a fevered reformer but a happy spectator. If, going to a musical comedy, he beholds a girl with pretty legs, the fact frankly pleases him. And if, attending upon more serious dramatic endeavors, he encounters a play which deals intelligibly with one of life's endless problems, he is pleased no less. He is hospitable to everything that is simple, honest, sincere. He is against everything that is opaque, bombastic, hypocritical. A sound critical creed, and out of it there has sprung an excellent book.

Of the other theatre books that wait for notice the most interesting, and by long odds, is Barrett H. Clark's "CONTEMPORARY FRENCH DRAMATISTS" (*Stewart-Kidd*), an intelligent and invaluable account of such fellows as Maurice Donnay, Georges de Porto-Riche, Paul Hervieu, Henri Lavedan and Alfred Capus. The degree of popularity that a living French playwright enjoys in England and America is almost always in inverse proportion to his actual merit. Rostand, true enough, is an exception, but consider the vast success of such cheap artisans as Bernstein and Brieux, the constant failure of such first-rate artists as Donnay and Hervieu. Donnay's single play, "Amants," is worth the whole canon of Bernstein melodramas; Hervieu's "Les Tenailles" and "Le Dédale," particularly the latter, show more sound reasoning upon the subject of sex than all the cheap thrillers of Brieux. Mr. Clark is peculiarly well fitted to expound the virtues of such dramatists; he seems to have fairly soaked himself in the modern French drama, as Brander Matthews soaked himself in the primitive French drama of Scribe's time. He is not only a sympathetic and illuminating critic of it, but also a skilful translator, as a lengthening shelf of volumes shows. The latest contains translations of Donnay's "Amants," "Les Eclairuses" and "Eux," and bears the title of "LOVERS: THE FREE WOMAN: THEY" (*Kennerley*).

Another current translation from the French is one of Bernstein's "THE THIEF," by John Alan Haughton (*Doubleday*), with a somewhat labored introduction by Prof. Dr. Richard Burton, a Drama League pundit, who wobbles between the duty of arguing that the play is worth studying and the duty of saying frankly that it is a mere piece of bosh. Of vastly more interest is a translation of David Pinsky's play, "Der Schatz," by Ludwig Lewisohn, under the title of "THE TREASURE" (*Huebsch*). Pinsky is a dramatist of undoubted skill and imagination, and so long ago as 1905, when the revolutionary tragedy, "Die Familie Zwee," was presented in New York by Paul Orloff, he attracted the attention of the English-speaking critics. But no one thought to turn one of his plays into English until Dr. Lewisohn undertook the task. Now that a beginning has been made, why not translate more specimens of the drama? The late Jacob Gordin's "The Kreutzer Sonata" (not to be confused with the Tolstoi story) was good enough to hold the boards, in English, for two or three years. No doubt he left many another play of equal merit, and perhaps a number far better. Again, there are the dramas of Abraham Goldfaden, Leon Kobrin (a merciless realist), Joseph Lateiner, Moses Hurwitz, Sholom Asch and Z. Libin. Who will explore them and report upon them? . . . Other newly printed plays: "A WOMAN'S WAY," by Thompson Buchanan (*Doubleday*); "A MAN'S WORLD," by Rachel Grothers (*Badger*); "ARMAGEDDON," by Stephen Phillips (*Lane*), a sort of burlesque war play, quite pathetic in its banality; "THE JUDGE," by Louis J. Block (*Badger*), and "RED WINE OF ROUSSILLON," by William Lindsey (*Houghton*), a mediæval setting of the story of Enoch Arden, in second-rate blank verse.

Upon the novels that have reached me since our last meeting I can lavish, I regret to say, no fevered encomiums. They cling to a middle merit, a general flatness. Even in their badness they are

safe and sane. When one has said of such things as "THE WAY OF THESE WOMEN," by E. Phillips Oppenheim (*Little-Brown*), and "MR. BINGLE," by George Barr McCutcheon (*Dodd-Mead*), and "THE LOVABLE MEDDLER," by Leona Dalrymple (*Reilly-Britton*), and "MAKING MONEY," by Owen Johnson (*Stokes*)—when one has said of such confections that they are sound, union-made trade-goods, offering a pleasing and soothing entertainment without making the slightest demand upon the intelligence, one has said all of them that needs to be said. True enough, there are underlying psychic horrors—the hero of "Making Money" is a Wall Street operator, the hero of "The Lovable Meddler" is full of Scotch dialect—but of such defects let us not discourse. It is more interesting to glance at the pictures. The heroine of "Making Money," as she is depicted by James Montgomery Flagg, is a fair creature of between twelve and thirteen years; the hero of "The Lovable Meddler," as drawn by Grant Tyson Reynard, shows the strained, fixed smile of an imbecile, and is brilliantly cock-eyed; the heroine of "The Way of These Women," limned by C. H. Taffs, has hair of an astounding shade of red and wears cloth-top boots to match it. These touches of originality cheer and comfort the ancient novel-reader, the cicatrized veteran of the fictional shambles. Again, one notes that the hero of "Making Money" is but 6 feet 11 inches in height—a benign shrinking, an agreeable moderation. Such novelties, small though they may be, give much delight. . . .

One finds delight, too, in "SHADOWS OF FLAMES," by Amélie Rives (*Stokes*), an old-time tale of passion, of a sort too seldom seen in these days of aeroplane elopements and other such mechanical aids to romance. Here we have the personages and machinery of a nobler and more spacious day—a heroine who, after violent adventures in amour, finds her solace at last in the love of her beautiful child; a hero who takes morphine and is drowned in Lago

Maggiore; another who is an almost lyrical boozier; an atmosphere of *high life* and international intrigue; in brief, most of the sweets that Ouida used to give us. One encounters haughty, blooded, tilt-nosed folk: the Marchese Marco Amaldi, Prince Suberov, Viscountess Wychcote, the Countess Hohenfels, Lady Chassilis, the Hon. Cecil Chesney, M.P., Count Varesca, Mr. John Arundel, M.P., Col. Bollingham, Mr. Surtees. The scene shifts from New York to Venice, from London to Virginia. The air is laden with fragments of all the polite languages: French, Italian, even a bit of High German, to wit, "*Wie gehts*" (Page 115). And to all this appetizing quality, quantity is added, for the book runs to 590 pages of small print and weighs twenty-two ounces. I offer it confidently to the thrifty novel-buyer; it is well worth the money.

Next those charming fellows, the Russians. In "THE DEATH OF IVAN ILTYCH," by Count Leo Tolstoy (*Lane*), we have a meticulously exact description of a fatal case of cancer of the stomach, done with the utmost gusto. In one of the stories in "THE MILLIONAIRE," by Michael Artzibashef (*Huebsch*), we have a precise account of the ravishment and murder of a young school marm by a trio of officials. Pleasant stuff, to be sure! Excellent for reading on a dark, windy night, just before going to bed in a haunted house! And yet, for all the laborious gruesomeness of this Russian story-telling, it would be idle to deny the skill that it shows, or the fine earnestness underlying it. In the Tolstoy volume are seven stories, and every one of them reveals the hand of a first-rate craftsman, even the revolting cancer story. And of the three tales in the Artzibashef book, at least one, "The Millionaire," belongs to the best fiction of the day. It is a painstaking, full-length study of the effects of large wealth upon a somewhat commonplace man, or, to be more precise, of the effects of the public distrust with which large wealth surrounds its possessor.

Fedor Ivanovitch Mishuief, in the midst of his money-bags, is tortured and destroyed by loneliness. Artzi-bashef's lone story, "BREAKING POINT" (*Huebsch*), seems to me to be much lower in quality. The truth is that I have been quite unable to read more than half of it, and that I am thus unable to make a more precise report upon it.

In "THE RESEARCH MAGNIFICENT" (*Macmillan*) there is more and yet more proof of the artistic disintegration of H. G. Wells. Four or five years ago he was unquestionably the most amusing living English novelist; such things as "Tono-Bungay," "Mr. Polly" and "Ann Veronica" were models of lively and incisive story-telling. But to-day he heaves and rolls like a ship without a rudder. His novels lack design, coherence, intelligible purpose and direction. Falling back time and again upon the childish device of the posthumous manuscript, he strings together a series of vapid speculations in politics and sociology upon a thread of uninteresting story. It was so in "Boon"; it is so again in "The Research Magnificent." The central idea—that the emotions work against the higher functioning of the intellect, that civilized man is crippled by the feelings that are his heritage from the childhood of the race—is borrowed from Nietzsche. Its working out is so badly managed that one wonders, at the end, whether Wells has been trying to expound it or to muddle it and make it seem ridiculous. He seems to have quite lost all capacity for clear and orderly thinking, and all skill at writing no less. He is not only clumsy; he is downright stupid. In the past

year he has published no less than four books, and all of them have been intolerably bad.

The remaining novels are scarcely worth much notice. Some of them—*e. g.*, "STRAIGHT DOWN THE CROOKED LANE," by Bertha Runkle (*Century*), and "THE PEARL FISHERS," by H. de Vere Stacpoole (*Lane*)—are harmless pieces of romantic bosh, obviously designed for enchanting boobs. Others—*e. g.*, "LITTLE MISS GROUCH," by Samuel Hopkins Adams (*Houghton*), and "THE DUAL ALLIANCE," by Marjorie Benton Cooke (*Doubleday*)—are simple love tales, as archaic in their structure as the fables of Aesop. "ME," by some fair scrivener unknown (*Century*), is the chronicle of a poor working girl's adventures in industry and amour, bouncingly and entertainingly, if somewhat conventionally, told. "PETER PARAGON," by John Palmer (*Dodd-Mead*), is the biography of an Oxford prig—not done satirically, mind you, but sympathetically! How could you, John Palmer! "MARIA AGAIN," by Mrs. John Lane (*Lane*), and "EMMA MCCHESENEY & Co.," by Edna Ferber (*Stokes*), are collections of humorous sketches, each with a woman as its central personage. "AYESHA OF THE BOSPHORUS," by Stanwood Cobb (*Murray*), is a story of Turkey by a man who has actually been there, and who esteems and understands the Turkish people. "WHEN HANNAH VAR EIGHT YAR OLD," by Katherine Peabody Girling (*Stokes*), is a short story running to pathos. "THE PRAIRIE WIFE," by Arthur Stringer (*Bobbs-Merrill*), almost describes itself. . . .

Let the rest wait. I am athirst. . .





In the Shops of the Smart Set

By Jeanne Judson

If you are interested in advance information, not only about the mode, but about things novel, dainty and useful, to be found in New York's

best shops, you will read the following pages with pleasure and profit. We will be glad to tell you where any of these articles can be found, or we will purchase them for you if you desire. Simply address your inquiry to The Smart Set Shop Department, and be sure to enclose stamped, addressed envelope for reply.

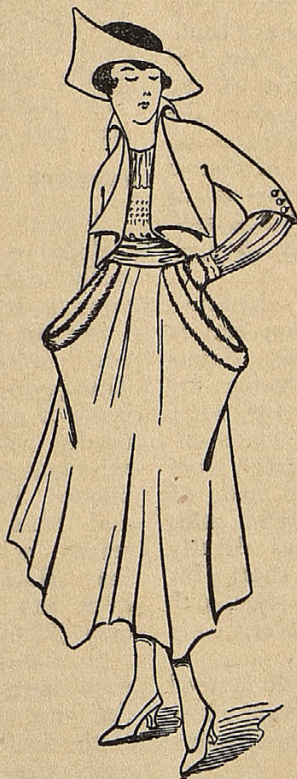


THERE is nothing simple about this winter's styles, which are quite definitely established by this time. For a year the war has had its depressing effect, but now Dame Fashion is coming forth in more frivolous and fantastic mood than ever. There is still a trace of militarism to be seen in some of the modes, but for the most part they are very gay, and intensely feminine.

Never has fur been so extensively utilized. More fur coats will be worn than ever before, and fur is being utilized as trimming for more garments and in more original ways than would have been dreamed possible last season. Fur around shoe-tops, fur pockets on cloth coats, fur hats—fur in every imaginable place. "Furs" in the old meaning of the term—muff and scarf, cape or stole—will not play a very important part this season.

To be sure, when you see Milady tripping modestly down Fifth Avenue with her hands clasped demurely before her you

will think that she is carrying a muff, but this is not so. It is only the wide muff cuffs of her coat. The cuffs are deep, of some rich fur, and when her hands are clasped together (the approved way of carrying them) the cuffs look like a small muff.



PANTALET STOCKINGS

If her shoes are low you will see pantalet stockings beneath her short skirt. Pantalet stockings are made with three full, knitted ruffles at the ankle, each ruffle adorned with an edging of lace. Perhaps each white ruffle will have a band of pink or blue around it above the lace edging. If an ankle watch is seen coyly peeping between the ruffles the effect is even more striking. An exclusive hosiery shop on Fifth Avenue is showing these stockings for \$6.50 a pair. While many people will consider them too extreme for any except stage use, there is little doubt but that they will have some vogue before high shoes replace low ones for street wear.



Other new hose are of shaded striped silk; black with a fine stripe of purple, blue, gray or brown to match the suit or gown. These of heavy silk cost \$3.50 a pair.

NEW COATS AND SUITS

The suit illustrated on page 314 is of English tweed. It is yellowish tan in color, checked with fine black lines. The high collar and the cuffs are banded with Hudson seal. The waist line is well defined and the skirt of the coat is quite full and flaring over the hips. The skirt is wide, circular and short. There is a loose belt of double cords, finished with ball tassels of Hudson seal. The price of this suit, shown in a large Broadway shop, is \$59.50.

Almost every sort of fur is being used for coats. But Hudson seal is perhaps the most in evidence. Krimmer is very popular as a trimming, for coats of some other kind of fur, but I saw one smart, short model made entirely of this fur. Another smart, short coat, a youthful model, was made of hemster, with beaver collar and cuffs. The coat was fitted, flaring slightly over the hips. Another short fur coat, made in the loose pony style, with three deep pockets of beaver, costs \$150.00.

These short coats are much favored for young girls, while coats in older models are much oftener three-quarters or full length.

TWO COATS IN ONE

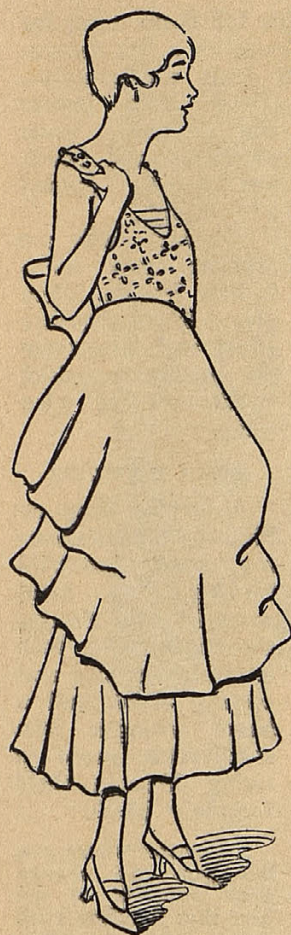
A very good-looking general utility coat is the one illustrated on this page. It is made of the new rayè, woven stripe corduroy—a new material which promises to be in great demand this season. It can be had in gray, brown, green, navy or black. The collar and cuffs are of skunk-opossum—a new fur, which is really neither skunk nor opossum. The bottom of the coat is banded with the same fur. The coat is three-quarters length and may be worn either with or without the belt. Belted, it is a splendid coat for general wear. Without the belt it may be used as an evening coat. So one can really buy two coats in one in this model, and the price is only \$37.50.

Very similar to the coat illustrated is one of brown rayè, made on looser lines and without fur trimming. It is lined with peau de cygne, belted and has motor bag pockets. These pockets, one of the really new coat features this season, are like large, round bags, which are fastened to the outside of the coat, instead of hanging inside. They possess the advantages of roominess and convenience.

PRETTIER THAN EVER EVENING GOWNS

That the somber influence of war on fashions is passing is evidenced by the really elaborate designs in evening gowns. In a large shop on Broadway, I saw an evening frock in which the new modes are admirably expressed. This gown, illustrated on page 313, was made of changeable rose taffeta, with a beaded white chiffon underskirt. The skirt is made with a panniere. It has a pointed bodice embroidered in silver and blue. The neck is low and square, with a set-in of tucked meline. Half circlets of flowers are hung over the shoulders. The price is only \$39.50.

In the same shop I saw a gown even more striking to look at than the one illustrated. It was of gold cloth, made with a draped skirt. The waist was veiled with pale yellow net,



and the rather high girdle was belted with twisted yellow and old blue chiffon, finished with a blue satin bow and a knot of silk flowers. The price of this gown is \$65.00.

The afternoon frock illustrated on page 311 is being shown by a Fifth Avenue shop. It is of dark blue chiffon velvet trimmed with white fox fur. The blouse is of red chiffon with a net yoke. The blouse is embroidered in silver. The white fox fur adorns neck and sleeves and there are two wide, loose

pockets of white fox fur on either side of the skirt. The skirt is made to hang in four points. The price of this model is \$97.50.

Another charming afternoon frock shown in the same shop is of marquise. There is blue fox fur at neck and sleeves and a band of blue fox fur around the bottom of the skirt.

THE NEW CHAPEAUX

In hats one is allowed all the latitude imaginable this winter. From the stiff, mannish model of hatters' plush, to the wide picture hat or the chic velvet or fur turban, there is nothing that is not good style so long as it is really becoming.

A good example of the tailored hat

is of hatters' plush, in blue or black. There is a narrow band of moire ribbon around the crown, and the three small tips in the front are not ostrich tips at all, but such a clever imitation that one must have a very close view indeed to discover that they are made of blue silk fringe.

Another hat, illustrated on this page, is a development of the popular Quaker model. The brim is widened out and is not quite so stiff as on the regular Quaker hat. The crown is high and sloping. Blue velvet and silver roses adorn the side and a long black velvet tie hangs down the back of the brim and is thrown around the neck with quite un-Quakerlike coquetry. This hat, in black or dark blue velvet, costs \$14.50.

The vogue of bronze shoes has already been written about, but new styles are constantly appearing which are worthy of note. One New York shoemaker, who has three shops near Fifth Avenue, is showing a high bronze evening shoe with silver beaded straps all the way up from toe to ankle, each strap finished with a fancy button at the side.

Popular shoes for street wear are combinations of black buckskin and patent leather and dark blue kid tops with patent vamps.

One style motif which should not go unremarked is the wings which

are being so extensively worn. There are wee mahlina or silk butterfly wings on hats; there are big wings on the shoulders of evening gowns. They perch on the extreme edge of a hat brim or adorn a wrist.

Trains are really coming



back into fashion. This does not make the gown any longer in front, but the train begins at the shoulders and drapes itself down to the ground where it sometimes extends out as much as a yard in length. A close second to fur in the trimming of gowns is silver embroidery and silver braid.

SERPENTINE CUFFS

One upper Fifth Avenue shop is making quite a feature of serpentine cuffs on frocks. These are of fur, starting in an ordinary fur cuff and winding spirally up the sleeve to above the elbow.

Another fashion reminiscent of olden days is found in the carpet bags which one manufacturer claims are to be very popular this winter. They are not to be used for traveling, but as shopping bags which women will carry over the arm. Of course they will not be made of ordinary carpet like the old traveling bags, but of gay colored tapestries or in the less expensive models of chintz. These bags will be large enough to carry all the toilet articles which a woman usually considers necessary for a shopping trip, with a good space left over for cards, samples, engagement book, etc.

A lizard or a beetle

on a lady's hat this fall is no cause for alarm, even a mouse as a hat decoration would cause little consternation.

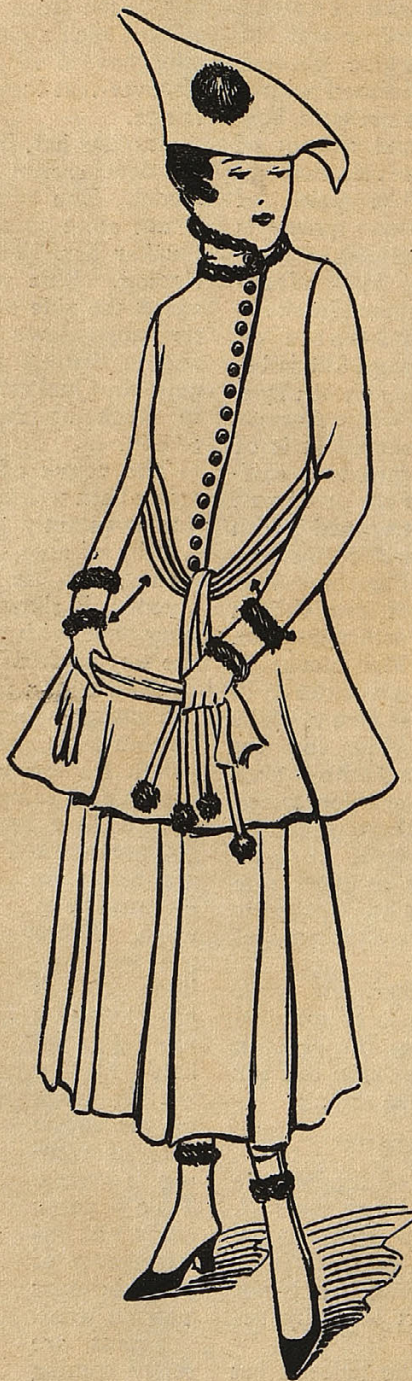
These little insects and animals, made of velvet and silver, are quite correct adornments.

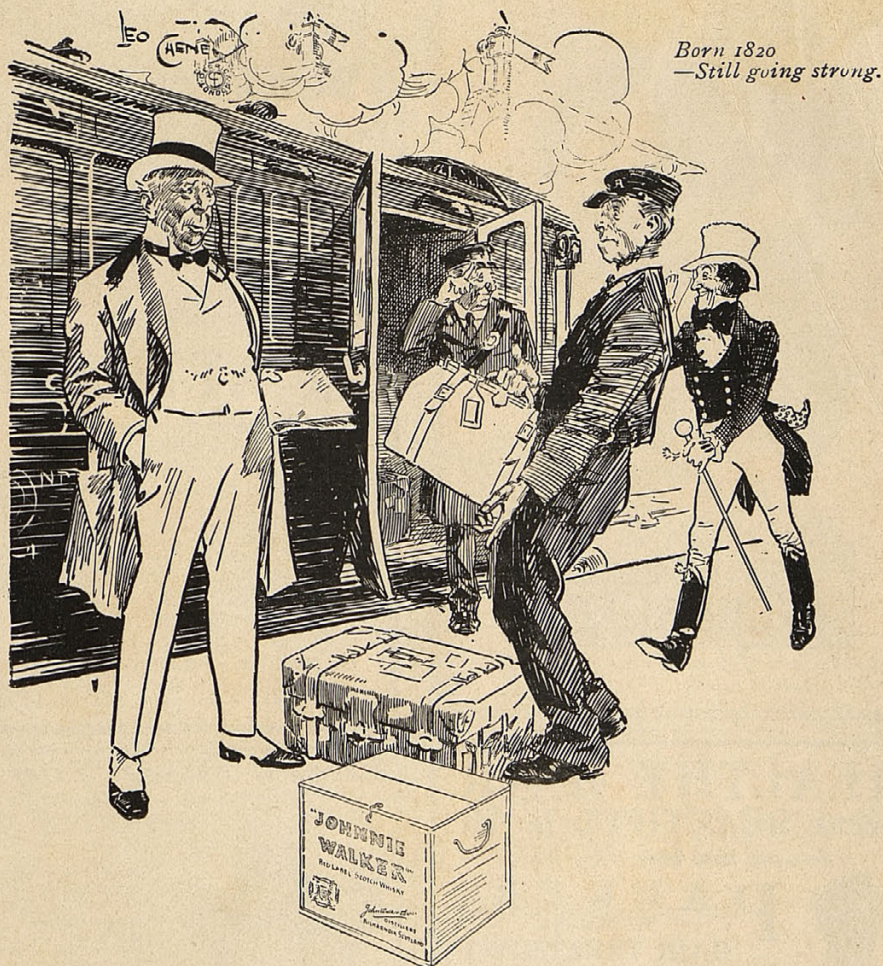
Shoulder cuffs are another truly new fashion feature. They give a broad shoulder effect and accentuate the newly acquired slenderness of the waist.

SOME NOVELTIES

A Studio Shop on Fifth Avenue is showing some beautiful things in hand wrought iron. Among them a toasting fork thirty inches long and costing \$2.00, and a hand wrought iron candlestick, made to swing from a shelf for only \$3.00.

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Porter (reassuringly, referring to the case of 'Johnnie Walker'): "IT WILL BE ALL RIGHT BEHIND, SIR."

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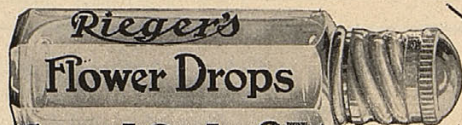
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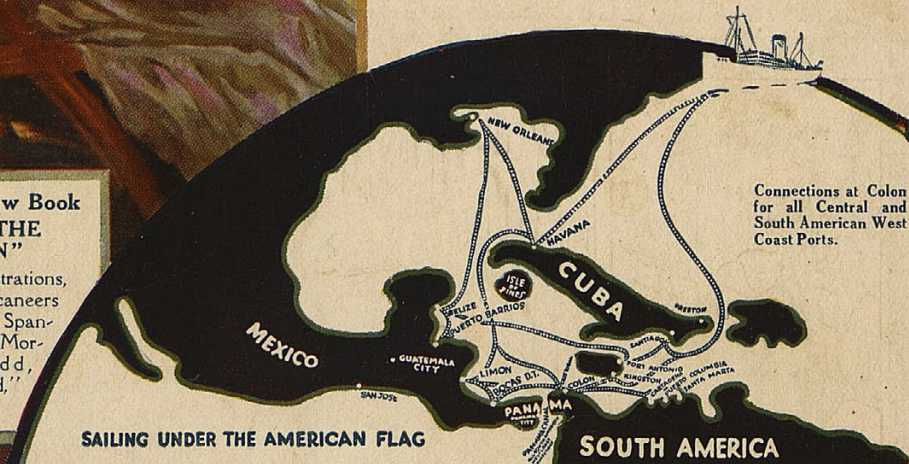
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